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ABSTRACT

This document consists of 10 monthly newsletter issues for 2001, in English and Spanish language versions, exploring topics related to early childhood behavior and parenting. Regularly appearing features include book recommendations, "Library Resources," "Preschoolers in the Kitchen," "Kids Crafts," "Research News," and "The Health Corner." Major topics of the newsletter issues are as follows (1) hope (January); (2) sibling play (February); (3) temperament (March); (4) children's fears (April); (5) teaching children history and geography at home (May); (6) learning how to parent from one's own parents (June); (7) pets (July-August); (8) writing a life book with children to help manage life passages (September); (9) having fun with math (October); and (10) values (November-December). (KB)

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Parent and Preschooler Newsletter: A Monthly Exploration of Early Childhood Topics, 2001.

Volume 16 Numbers 1-10

Neala S. Schwartzberg, Editor

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

PP Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award

Volume 16, Number 1 *An International Resource for Professionals and Parents* January 2001

The Gift of Hope

Hope is not immune to reality
but transcendent of it.
Hope lifts us up to higher ground,
where we can see
the bigger picture,
the wider vista,
the far horizon.

Anonymous

Passing of the Torch

My son, who recently turned 21, has always wanted a small plot of land. He loves the earth – has since the first time he discovered the wonders of dirt and mud. So, this past June, we got into our aging pickup truck and drove north to look at 8 1/2-acres. It was getting close to sundown when we found it.

We carefully snaked our way through the barbed wire fence and waded waist high into the tall brome grass. We stopped at the crest of a hill in the middle of the acreage, and I watched as my son walked down toward the creek bed. He turned and hollered, "This is it!" He had found the spot where he wanted to sink his roots.

That moment will stay with me forever. There I stood, a man smack in the middle of his 50s, and in my mind's eye I had a clear view from that ridge – I could see a heritage passing from my father through me to my son.

Parents, along with our children, are part of a living history that stretches off into an unforeseen future. What gift can we give our children for that journey? I think the best gift is one that truly keeps giving – the gift of hope.

This Thing Called Hope

Hope starts with the simple premise that we want things. These "things" represent goals. Our goals may be small ("I want to get a drink of water") or large ("I want to buy a car"). They may be short-term ("I'll complete that assignment in the next hour") or long-term ("I'm going to lose weight"). We all have an endless supply of goals.

These goals are the targets for our hopeful thinking. But two ingredients are necessary in order to achieve goals.

First, there is *waypower thinking*, a belief in our ability to come up with routes to reach our goals. When they confront obstacles and set-backs, hopeful children believe that they can think of ways to get the things in life that are important. Alternate plans and flexibility are crucial for waypower thinking.

Second, there is *willpower thinking*. This is the motivational part of hopeful thinking. It is the knowledge that the children's actions can lead to achieving their goals.

Hopeful thinking, therefore, reflects our children's beliefs that they can come up with (1) clear goals, (2) the ways to reach desired goals (waypower), and (3) the motivation to use those routes (willpower).

Hope Works

In over 30 studies, we have consistently found that the high-hope

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children do better in school and sports. They cope better with life and its setbacks, and they feel better about themselves and their lives in general.

It isn't superior ability that causes hopeful children to succeed. Children who have only modest skills can reach their goals, *if they have high hope*. And the children with strong natural abilities, *who do not have high hope*, can have difficulty in achieving their dreams.

The point? Thinking hopefully is not the same as having natural talents. This means that hope is something that children can learn – *and parents can teach*.

The Point of It All Setting Goals

Almost from the moment that your child is born, you can help her to create workable goals. The essence of such hope-inducing parenting is to establish a rich, stimulating environment that is filled with potential goals.

Place some attention grabbers near your infant's crib so she can marvel at them. Try to reach all of your infant's senses. For example, use brightly colored mobiles to stimulate vision; try music boxes for hearing; and a soft stuffed animal will work for activating touch.

Infants express goals when they turn their gazes upon these desired objects, attempt to point to the objects and utter some sounds (which probably are the precursors to their actual labeling of objects via language).

As your babies get older, help them to use words to specify precisely what they want. For instance, when your one-year-old points a chubby finger at something, you can ask, "What is it?" If your child looks puzzled, tell him child the answer, e.g., "That's a ball." Next ask, "Can you say 'ball'?"

You may think that you are beginning to sound like Mr. Rogers – but stick with it. In my experience, toddlers love this game. In this process, you are teaching your son to explore and identify goals, and to expand his vocabulary of goal-related words.

Praise your offspring for asking questions about their small worlds, and label what they see. Coach your children by helping them to develop the appropriate words for their goals. To use my granddaughter, Drew, as an example, my wife (code name "Nona") was playing with her one day. Suddenly, Drew held out her arms and said, "Ugh!" In response, Nona said, "Say 'up,'" and picked her up. In a few days, Drew herself was saying "Up" when she wanted to be held.

Such goal lessons continue across childhood years. The best goals for children represent "stretches." A stretch is a goal that is slightly more challenging.

A good example of such stretch goals involves learning to ride a bike. I am the person in our family who traditionally has trained the youngsters to ride bicycles. Running along side the child who is peddling madly, I holler, "Keep going! You are doing great! Just a little farther!" And then when the first crash happens, I hug my child and say, "Look at how far you rode your bike! Take a look at that... Pretty great, huh?"

I then ask my son (or daughter or granddaughter), "How about setting a goal of riding a little bit farther?" Little by little, the distance increases, and soon there comes that glorious, smiling moment of insight when the child yells, "HEY, I AM RIDING A BIKE!"

Waypower

Once children can set goals, they need to believe that they can plan ways to achieve their goals.

Waypower learning basically starts with showing them how they cause things to happen. Humans naturally seem to look for cause and effect. These "this leads to that" linkages are being learned from the moment of birth. Our parenting task is to teach our infants this simple causal formula and to continue these lessons throughout their childhoods.

Let's start with the basic lesson of teaching your infant how to make noise. Take a little rattle or bell, and tie it within arms reach of your child. Make sure that your infant can see this noisemaker. Take the infant's hand and slowly lift it to touch the rattle.

If you repeat this a few times soon the baby will have learned the connection and will be making the noise happen (with great glee, I might add!). In hardly any time, your baby will be banging on "drums" (or anything that makes noise when hit by hand or a stick). As babies get

older and can crawl (and walk), they get great pleasure in pulling noise-making objects.

Babies also enjoy pushing brightly colored balls on the floor. This can lead to an early version of "catch" where the parent and child roll the ball back and forth to each other. Be sure to make a great big deal about the fact that your baby is making something happen.

Many of these activities are quite noisy. We parents may get tired from doing them, but these games are crucial for imparting waypower thinking to our offspring. If the noises of banging pots, falling blocks, bouncing balls, and parental praise fill your home, then it also is likely that waypower thinking is being learned.

Toddlers are absolutely fascinated with "this leads to that" waypower lessons and the infamous "why?" question. From our grownup perspective, it may seem as if the toddlers are hardly paying attention to our answers to their seemingly endless "why?" questions. They are listening, however. These questions are extremely important to the toddlers who are human sponges in their soaking up of causal linkage information.

As our children get older, waypower lessons continue. Reading to our children helps them learn the sequence of events in particular tales. The string of events in any story is very important to the child's understanding of causality. Children quickly learn the unfolding story plots, and even will correct us if we leave out any page (or line!) in our attempts to speed up the bed time reading ritual. Nursery rhymes also are particularly good for "this leads to that" sequencing lessons.

Another important set of waypower lessons involves teaching children to break down a goal into doable, short steps. These subgoals provide a route to the end goal. One approach to this "stepping" process is ask your child to state her goal in her own words. Help her to see the steps she needs to take. Then, concentrate on teaching your child to make the first steps toward reaching the longer-term goal. High-hope children practice this stepping throughout their developmental years, and continue to use it as adults.

Finally, teach your children that their unsuccessful goal attempts do not mean that they are failures or lack talent. Rather, these situations should be thought of as providing clues about what routes are not working. Try to help your child to see that unsuccessful routes can provide useful information about other routes that may well work.

Willpower

Teaching willpower thinking is similar to becoming a motivational coach. Take every opportunity to make sure that your children realize that they are the ones who made something happen. Praise your children whenever they show determination. In addition, here are some research and practice-based techniques for imparting determination to your children.

From ages one to two, try a game called "Who Did That?", which toddlers especially enjoy. Suppose you are playing a game of rolling a ball back and forth with your child. When your child makes the ball come back, you ask, "Who pushed the ball?" The child will announce proudly, "Andy (or whatever the child's name may be) pushed it." Or, if Mother says to Andy, "Let's run across the field" (which they do). "Who was running?" asks Mom. Andy, looking puzzled, answers, "Mommy." "Good, and who else was running?" asks Mom. "Andy was!" exclaims the child. Whenever you do something with your young child, ask him what part he played.

A similar game is to ask your child what she can do. A toddler is delighted to tell you her feats, and the willpower answers abound: "Lucy can _____ (run, jump, talk, go potty by herself, take off shoes, throw ball, etc.)."

These toddler games turn into a "credit" game for older children. Throughout childhood, give credit to your children for activities they start as well as activities that they continue. Never take for granted any of your child's efforts – even getting up to go to school. In my experience, low-hope children perceive that their parents never praise them for any of their efforts.

Another approach for increasing your child's willpower is to teach him to say to himself "I can do this." Audio cassettes tapes and CDs are common in the lives of our children today. You can suggest that it is time to change the internal "I can't" tapes to a new tape that says, "I can..." (or some other motivational mantra that works for your child). If this new voice takes hold, children

will experience an increase in their willpower.

Sometimes it is tempting when we are in a hurry (or tired) to say to our child, "You can't do this" or "Oh, I'll do it myself." Such statements may contribute to the "I can't" voice in your child's mind. Instead, let your child be the one who does things – even if it means that he occasionally will not get to his goal in his first few tries. "I can" messages beget continued thoughts about trying, which is the essence of willpower thinking.

Perhaps the most powerful willpower boost for our children is our encouragement. By sticking with our children and repeating our encouragements, we are helping them to keep their willpower for those times when extended effort is needed to reach a desired goal.

Statements such as "You know I'm behind you" and "You can do it" are invigorating. Offer your support, whatever the age of your child. The spirits of our children are raised when they know that their parents are supporting them, and standing by them when things get tough.

What else can we do to help our kids to maintain their willpower in the face of barriers? First, teach your child that being blocked is a normal part of life. You could talk about the tough spots that you faced when they were young. Include some examples when you struggled unsuccessfully and successfully with a problem.

A child may forget to give herself credit for her past perseverance and eventual success. You can review her effortful experiences – and teach her how to do this as a means of renewing her determination.

Another willpower lesson is to teach your children to enjoy the journey to their goals as much (or more) as actually reaching them.

By placing emphasis on the process of going after goals children are freed to have fun and enjoy the "trip."

This attitude about goals is far more energizing than just viewing achievement as the only rewarding part of pursuits. Children who are focused only on end goals often try desperately not to make errors. A major part of learning, however, is a willingness to take risks and make mistakes. Instead of heaping praise on your child only when he obtains goals, I suggest praising that boy's willingness to undertake somewhat risky tasks, to make errors, and to take pleasure in the goal pursuit process.

Wrap It With Time

In previous sections, I've talked about how to encourage your children's goal setting, as well as waypower and willpower thinking. But there is one more thing that is crucial to hope – *your time*. In our studies, we have asked low- and high-hope young adults to tell us about their childhoods. Perhaps the most striking thing that we learned is that those with high hope had at least one adult caregiver who spent large amounts of time with them during their developing years.

Contributing our time means raising our child's hope. This is a simple guideline, but those of us who are parents may have forgotten it in our fast-paced lives. Our gift of hope, then, should be wrapped in countless hours spent with our children.

A Gift That Keeps Giving

Hope is the link between what we are today and the better tomorrows that are down the road. If we practice a hopeful approach to our lives, and teach our children to think hopefully, then that road to the future will hold wonderful promise.

At some point in our lives, all of us may be treated to a glimpse of the line of hope that passes from our ancestors, through us, to our children. Whether you are standing on a hill in the middle of Kansas or in a canyon of one of our giant cities, hope provides a site line to our children's collective futures.

C. R. (Rick) Snyder, Ph.D., is Professor and Director of the Clinical Psychology Program at the University of Kansas. He recently received the 2000 American Psychological Association Fowler Award for Outstanding Educator. He is also co-author with Diane McDermott of "The Great Big Book of Hope: Help Your Children Achieve Their Dreams," 2000 (New Harbinger Publications; Oakland, Ca.). He is also editor of "Handbook of Hope: Theory, Measures, and Applications," 2000 (Academic Press; San Diego, Ca.).

Dear Reader

Like most of us, I had a complex relationship with my mother. She was a strong, assertive woman when women weren't supposed to be that way. She was at her best with older children and teenagers, so the older I got, the more admirable she seemed to become. She was also a consistent source of encouragement and support. When she died I spent a long time trying to understand the meaning and purpose of life.

Then, I had an epiphany much like Rick Synder's. There is an unbroken chain stretching across the generations – each nurturing the next one. Dr. Synder asks, "What shall we pass on to our children?" He suggests hope. We concur. In his outstanding article, he provides ways we can help our children move hopefully into their futures.

What else is in this issue? Another piece of Research News. We'll be doing that from time to time – letting you know when we come across a study that says something important about parents and children. For years researchers have talked about the importance of social support. Now, the benefits seem to accrue even before birth!

We also review hopeful and can-do books for kids. Sandy Allen again gives us a yummy recipe, this time for muffins–baking is a perfect winter activity.

Neala Schwartzberg

Research News

Social Support During Pregnancy Can Enhance Fetal Growth and Birth Weight

An infant's birth weight may be increased by the amount of social support the mother receives during pregnancy, according to a new study published in the September/October 2000 issue of Psychosomatic Medicine.

Nearly 250 pregnant women, who attended prenatal clinics at either a university-affiliated hospital or their low-risk birth center in the United States, were asked about the amount of support and assistance they expected to receive from their partner, friends, and family.

Women with several types of support from different sources during their pregnancies had higher birth weight babies.

The relationship between social support and birth weight held even after the researchers, lead by Pamela Feldman, PhD of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London, UK, took into account other factors often associated with low birth weight, including premature delivery, and medical conditions such as hypertension.

Rather than contributing to a longer-term pregnancy (allowing the babies more time to grow), social support appears to contribute to birth weight by enhancing fetal growth processes. The researchers speculate that social support may alter responses of the nervous system to stress and improve babies' prenatal growth.

Social support may also inspire healthier behaviors and lifestyles, and discourage behaviors like smoking, substance use, and poor nutritional intake – all risk factors for low birth weight infants.

Article: "Maternal Social Support Predicts Birth Weight and Fetal Growth in Human Pregnancy," Pamela Feldman, PhD, Christine Dunkel-Schetter, PhD, Curt A. Sandman, PhD and Pathik D. Wadhwa, MD, PhD, **Psychosomatic Medicine** Vol 62: 715-725 (2000).

What Does it Mean?

Social support during pregnancy has been associated with the health and well-being of the mother. But this research suggests that it is healthier for the babies too!

Birth weight, and length of gestation (duration of pregnancy) are considered to be indications of the health of the newborn. This study took into account the length of gestation, and suggests that an additional process is operating. The babies were simply growing better.

There are several ways social support could result in heavier (and healthier) babies. Social support -- knowing that a spouse, family, and friends will be there for help and assistance – may motivate mothers to take better care of their health and thus the health of the baby. Support may also reduce the stresses these mothers experience and reduce the adverse effect of those stresses on their babies' growth. The result was better prenatal growth, and heavier birth weights.

Neala S. Schwartzberg, PhD

New Ways to Display Your Child's Art

Does your child bring home art work? Has your little one scribbled on a piece of paper in crayon and proudly handed you the masterpiece? Have you wondered what to do with it? Here are some new ways to display your child's artwork.

Three-Tier Wall Hanging

Make a wall-hanging out of foam core and patterned paper. Here, the art is tacked on each panel with Velcro so it's easy to change the show. Connect the panels with keychain-type chains, available in craft stores, or binder rings, available in office-supply stores.

• Supplies: foam core, three pieces of 8½ x 11" patterned paper, four small linked key chain bracelets, metal ruler, utility knife, drill, 1 yard 1½" grosgrain ribbon, hot glue, glue stick, Velcro (you can also use double-sided tape), children's art.

• Instructions: Using a metal ruler and utility knife, cut three 8½ x 11" pieces of foam core. Mount the patterned paper to the foam core with glue stick. Drill two small holes where the foam core panels will connect: at the bottom of the top panel, the top and bottom of the middle panel, and the top of the bottom panel. Connect all three pieces of foam with key chain bracelets. Place short piece of Velcro (or sturdy double-sided tape) in the middle of each piece of foam core (a complementary piece will be mounted on the back of the child's art, making it interchangeable). Tie a bow in the middle of the ribbon and hot glue the ends to the back side of the top foam core sheet. Hang from ribbon.

Craft Stick Frames

Use craft sticks to make inexpensive frames for displaying art. Leave them natural or paint them using paint from the artwork inside. Craft sticks are available by the box at craft stores.

• Supplies: cardboard, washable paint, tacky glue, double-sided tape, ribbons, children's drawing.

• Instructions: Secure the corners of your child's drawing to a slightly larger piece of cardboard with double-stick tape. Paint craft sticks. Arrange the sticks to make a frame, overlapping the sticks to form corners then glueing the overlaps with tacky glue. Finally, glue the cardboard to the back of the frame. To make a hanger, tie a bow in the center of the piece with ribbon and glue the ends to the back of the frame with tacky glue.

Twine and Clothespin Display

Create your own homemade gallery with twine and painted wooden clothespins. Rotate artwork as new masterpieces come in. For safety, be sure to hang the twine high enough so it's out of reach of younger children.

This simple display can work with art of different sizes, although you can photocopy and reduce the size to 8½ x 11" to accommodate to space limitations.

Clothespin displays don't protect original art against dust (another reason to consider making color copies before hanging masterpieces this way). But clothespins are much less damaging to art than tape used to affix them to a refrigerator or wall.

• Supplies: A length of twine, jute, or ribbon; hinged clothespins (the kind you squeeze to open), washable paint, children's art.

• Instructions: Paint the clothespins (or use ones that are already colored). Once they are dry, go back and paint designs with contrasting colors. Knot the ends of the twine to prevent raveling. Tie small loops (to hang on walls) near the ends of the twine, and one in the middle, if needed, for support. Attach artwork to the twine with clothespins.

Source: These and other wonderful ideas for displaying and using children's art come from Mom's Little Book of Displaying Children's Art by Lisa Bearnson published by Creating Keepsakes Books, Orem, Utah, 2000, $16.95. The book is available at most retail and online bookstores.

Preschooler in the Kitchen

In Brazil, January is the hottest month of the year. The Catholic holiday, "The Coming of the Three Kings" is celebrated on January 6th. It is the day when families celebrate the last part of Christmas, little gifts are exchanged and food is served. January and February are the two months of school vacation.

In my culinary school days, this was the time when our group stayed in the school to invent or produce new recipes for the school's restaurant, and for our dining room meals. We had to come up with new recipes for breads, cakes, muffins, menus for complete meals like breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. This is a recipe I created from that time. It was well liked by my teachers, the patrons, and the students. This recipe gave me high marks too.

In Portuguese Bolinhos literally means "little cakes," and these are named that because of their shape and texture. The Portuguese settlers introduced the little cakes in Brazil early 1800s. It was served at the royal tables and at the high society homes. But in the late 1800s most of the housewives had their own recipe for this delicious morsel.

Children, help your parent to prepare a bunch of these delicious muffins. After they are baked, nestle yourself on mommy, or daddy's lap and eat the muffins with a glass of warm milk or hot chocolate. Have a wonderfully Happy New Year with the best of everything.

Pineapple Coconut Muffins

Bolinhos De Abacaxi E Coco

2½ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup grated unsweetened coconut (found in supermarket baking sections)
½ cup unsalted butter (1 stick) softened, room temperature
¼ cup vegetable oil
1 cup sour cream, at room temperature
1 cup packed brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs, at room temperature
grated rind of 1 orange
¾ cup orange juice, freshly squeezed
1 cup crushed drained pineapple
Utensils: muffin pan, oil spray or paper muffin cups, mixing bowls, wire whisk, rubber spatula, wooden spoon, measuring cups, measuring spoons, grater, oven mitts, wire rack.

Let's start. Wash your hands and put on your apron. Parent: Gather the ingredients on the counter. Read the recipe to your child and explain about each ingredient, where it comes from and what else it can be used for. Be relaxed and attentive, you and your child will have a wonderful time together.

• Parent: Preheat the oven to 375 F. Grate the orange rind and set aside. Show your child how to break the eggs in a small bowl. Set aside.

• Child: Coat the muffin pan with oil spray (or line with paper muffin cups) and set it aside. Measure the flour into a bowl, and measure the baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and coconut and add to the flour. Mix well with the wire whisk, set aside. Mix both sugars together in a small bowl. Set aside. Unwrap and place the butter in the other bowl. Measure and add the oil, and sour cream.

• Parent: Beat butter mixture with an electric beater with high speed until the mixture is well blended. Stop the mixer.

• Child: Add the sugars.

• Parent: Resume beating the mixture until well blended. Stop the machine.

• Child: Add the eggs.

• Parent: Resume beating the mixture until well blended. Stop the mixer.

• Child: Add the grated orange peel, orange juice, and pineapple. PARENT: Mix on lower speed.

• Parent: Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture. Combine and gently mix with the wire whisk without beating the batter. Then give a good mix with the wooden spoon but do not beat.

• Parent and child: Fill the muffin cups with the batter.

• Parent: Place it in the oven. Bake for 15 minutes, and then lower the oven temperature to 350 F. Bake for 20 minutes longer. Remove the muffin cups from the oven with the oven mitts. Place on the wire rack, and let cool for about 10 minutes. Unmold and let cool on the wire rack.

• Parent and Child: Arrange the muffins in a lined basket. They are good when a little warm. But do you know something? They are good eaten any time. Enjoy, and Happy New Year.

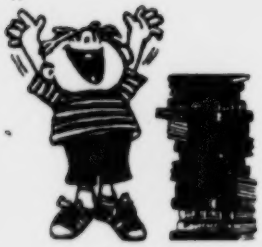
Variations: You may use the same amount of other fruits instead of the pineapple (e.g. strawberries, blueberries, mango, cherries) and nuts instead of coconut (e.g. almonds, walnuts) in this recipe.

Sandra N. Allen

moving?

We don't want you to miss even one issue. Send us your old label along with your new address to: *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*; NSC&FGC; 480 Old Westbury Road; Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215. And don't forget to notify your local post office of your address change.

Library Resources



I Did It! Books

📖 ***The Best Mouse Cookie*** by Laura Numeroff; illustrated by Felicia Bond; A Laura Geringer Book/HarperCollins Publishers; New York, 1999; Board book $6.95. Mouse wants to make cookies. He has a few problems along the way, but he enjoys the process of baking them. Bond's illustrations add a joyful sense of exuberance.

📖 ***The Boy Who Loved to Draw:*** Benjamin West by Barbara Brenner; illustrated by Olivier Dunrea; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover $15.00. The biography of the painter Benjamin West and how he discovered his love of drawing. With his unquenchable determination he became one of early America's most famous painters.

📖 ***Covered Wagons, Bumpy Trails*** by Verla Kay; illustrated by S. D. Schindler; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York, 2000; Hardcover $15.99. It took a lot for a family to cross this country by covered wagon. The story of one family's quest for a new home is told in simple rhyme, "Weary, bleary, sweaty, hot. End of day, a camping spot." The illustrations offer a rich depiction of the pioneers.

📖 ***The Day Gogo Went to Vote*** by Elinor Batezat Sisulu; illustrated by Sharon Wilson; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1996; Softcover $5.95. The story of a milestone in history when Black South Africans were finally allowed to vote. Gogo (grandmother) has waited a long time for this day and she is determined to vote. Her family is worried, but a neighbor's uncle helps her get to the polling place.

📖 ***The Escape of Marvin the Ape*** by Caralyn and Mark Buehner; Puffin Books; New York, 1999; Softcover $5.99. Marvin the Ape breaks out of the zoo in search of the good life. He finds it in the big city: fine restaurants, museums, baseball. Simple text and colorful pictures make it fun.

📖 ***Just Enough*** by Teri Daniels; pictures by Harley Jessup; Viking Press; New York, 2000; Hardcover $15.99. The little boy is small enough, strong enough, bold enough, and more to do all the things in his day.

📖 ***Mole's Moon*** by Hiawyn Oram; illustrated by Susan Varley; Puffin Books; New York, 1998; Softcover $5.99. No one believes Littlest Mole when he says he saw the moon in the water. They don't know about reflections and can't see in the dark. When mole saves them from being attacked by a fox, they all understand mole's ability.

📖 ***Molly Bannaky*** by Alice McGill; pictures by Chris K. Soentpiet; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover $16.00. Molly Walsh was lucky. Instead of going to jail for knocking over the milk pail of her employer in 1683 she was sent to be an indentured servant in America. At the end of seven years she was released and given enough to start her own farm. She reluctantly bought a slave, then freed him and married him. One of their grandchildren was Benjamin Banneker a scientist and mathematician.

📖 ***Right Here on This Spot*** by Sharon Hart Addy; illustrated by John Clapp; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover $15.00. This book provides the history of the cabbage field where Grampa drives a tractor. From prehistory when the Ice Age Paleo-Indians ate mastodon and chipped stones into tools, to soldiers going off to fight in the Civil War, and finally to Grampa and his tractor.

📖 ***True Heart*** by Marissa Moss; illustrated by C. F. Payne; Silver Whistle/Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, 1999; Hardcover $16.00. The story is about a woman engineer who worked at the B&O railroad sometime after the turn of the century. There certainly were women in work crews loading freight for the Union Pacific railroad in Cheyenne, Wy. This fictional biography of Bee who longed to be an engineer, and finally succeeded has more truth than we realize.

📖 ***Who is the World For?*** by Tom Pow; illustrated by Robert Ingpen; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, Ma., 2000; Hardcover $15.99. Each of the baby animals asks its parent "Who is the world for?" and the answer is always "the world is for you!" When the small boy asks his father this question the father explains that the world is for all the animals and all the people. But with parks and rivers and hills and seashores the world is also for that questioning little boy.

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El Legado de la Esperanza

La esperanza no está inmune de la realidad sino la transciende. La esperanza nos sube a un plano más alto donde podemos divisar el panorama completo, el paisaje más amplio, el horizonte distante.
Anónimo

Pasando la Antorcha

Mi hijo, que recientemente cumplió 21 años, siempre quiso ser propietario de una pequeña parcela. El ama la tierra desde que descubrió las maravillas de la greda y el barro. Por lo tanto, en junio pasado, nos subimos a nuestra vieja camioneta y nos dirigimos al norte a ver cuatro hectáreas. Era cerca del atardecer cuando la encontramos.

Cuidadosamente entramos a través de una reja de alambre de púa y caminamos a través con el pasto hasta la cintura. Nos detuvimos en la cima de un cerro en la mitad de la parcela y observe a medida que mi hijo caminaba hacia el estero. Se dio vuelta y gritó, "Este es". Había encontrado el lugar donde quería echar sus raíces.

Recordaré ese momento para siempre. He ahí yo, un hombre cincuentón, y en mi mente yo tenia una clara visión desde ese cerro -podía ver una herencia pasando desde mi padre, a través de mi, a mi hijo.

Los padres, junto con sus hijos, son partes de una historia viva que se extiende hacia un futuro imprevisto. Que tipo de legado le podemos dar a nuestros niños para ese viaje? Creo que el mejor legado es el que sigue entregando -el legado de la esperanza.

Esto que se Llama Esperanza

La esperanza empieza con la simple premisa de que queremos cosas. Estas "cosas" representan metas. Nuestras metas pueden ser pequeñas ("Quiero un vaso de agua") o grandes ("Quiero comprar un automóvil"). Pueden ser a corto plazo ("Completaré esa tarea en una hora más") o largo plazo ("Voy perder peso"). Todos tenemos un sinnúmero de metas.

Estas metas son el objetivo de nuestro anhelos. Sin embargo, dos ingredientes son necesarios para poder

lograr metas. Primero, hay pensamiento "waypower", una convicción sobre nuestra habilidad de encontrar maneras de lograr nuestros objetivos. Cuando enfrentan obstáculos y dificultades, los niños con esperanzas creen que pueden pensar sobre maneras de obtener las cosas importantes de la vida. Planes alternativos y flexibilidad son vitales para el pensamiento " waypower ".

Segundo, hay pensamiento de fuerza de voluntad. Esta es la parte de la motivación del pensamiento esperanzado. Es el conocimiento que las acciones de los niños pueden apuntar hacia lograr sus objetivos.

El pensamiento esperanzado refleja las creencias de nuestros hijos que pueden plantearse 1) objetivos claros, 2) maneras de lograr los objetivos deseados ("waypower"), y 3) la motivación de usar estos vías (fuerza de voluntad).

La Esperanza Funciona

En más de 30 estudios hemos consistentemente descubierto que los niños con altas esperanzas tienen mejores resultados en la escuela y en los deportes.

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En general, se enfrentan mejor a la vida y sus desilusiones y se sienten mejor sobre si mismos y sus vidas por lo general.

No es habilidad superior que causa que los niños con esperanzas tengan éxito. Niños que solamente tienen habilidades moderadas pueden lograr sus objetivos si tienen muchas esperanzas. Y los niños con habilidades natas que no tienen muchas esperanzas pueden tener problemas en lograr sus sueños.

Cual es el punto? Pensar con esperanzas no es lo mismo que tener un talento natural. Esto quiere decir que la esperanza es algo que los niños pueden aprender -y que los padres pueden enseñar.

El Punto Primordial es Establecer Metas

Casi desde el momento que nace su hijo Ud. puede ayurdarle a establecer metas factibles. La esencia de ser un padre que induce esperanza es establecer un entorno rico, estimulante que está lleno de metas posibles.

Ponga algunos objetos que le llamen la atención cerca de la cuna de su bebé para que ella se asombre. Trate de alcanzar a todos los sentidos de su bebé. Por ejemplo, use un móvil de colores llamativos para estimular su visión; use cajas de música para lo auditivo; y animales de peluche suaves que ayudarán a activar el tacto.

Los bebés expresan sus metas cuando miran los objetos deseados e intentan señalar los objetos y musitan algunos sonidos (que probablemente son los precursores de relacionar los objetos a través del lenguaje).

A medida que sus bebés crecen, ayúdeles a usar palabras que especifiquen exactamente lo que quieren. Por ejemplo, cuando un niño de un año apunta su dedo regordete hacia algo, Ud. puede preguntar, "Qué es"? Si su hijo parece confundido, dígale la respuesta, ej., "Es una pelota". Después pregunte, "Puedes decir pelota"?

Ud. pensará que se está pareciendo a Mr. Rogers, pero siga adelante. En mi experiencia, a los pequeñuelos les encanta este juego. En este proceso, Ud. le está enseñando a su hijo a identificar metas y a aumentar su vocabulario de palabras relacionadas a metas.

Elogie a sus hijos por hacer preguntas sobre sus pequeños mundos y titule lo que ven. Enséñele a sus niños ayudándoles a desarrollar palabras apropiadas a sus metas. Para usar a mi nieta Rosa como ejemplo, mi esposa (llamada "Nona") estaba un día jugando con ella. Súbitamente, Rosa levantó los brazos y dijo, ¡"Hua"! Como respuesta, Nona dijo, "Di 'arriba'", y la levantó. En unos pocos días, Rosa estaba diciendo "Arriba" cuando quería ser levantada.

Esas lecciones de metas continúan a través de los años de infancia. Las mejores metas para los niños representan "alargar". Alargar es una meta que es un poco más difícil.

Un buen ejemplo, de una meta alargada es aprender a andar en bicicleta. Yo soy la persona de mi familia que tradicionalmente ha enseñando a los niños a andar en bicicleta. Corriendo al lado de un niño que está pedaleando como loco, yo le grito, ¡"Sigue! ¡Lo estas haciendo muy bien! ¡Un poco más"! Y cuando se cae por primera vez, yo abrazo al niño y le digo, ¡"Mira hasta donde llegaste! ¡Mira! Harto bien, no"?

Y después le pregunto a mi hijo (o hija o nieta), "Qué te parece que fijemos la meta de que vayas un poco más lejos"? Poco a poco, la distancia aumenta y de repente hay un momento glorioso de realización cuando el niño grita, ¡"HEY, ESTOY ANDANDO EN BICICLETA"!

"Waypower"

Una vez que los niños fijan metas, tienen que creer que pueden planear maneras de lograr sus metas.

La instrucción "waypower" se inicia básicamente con mostrarles como pueden hacer que pasen las cosas. Los seres humanos parecen buscar naturalmente la causa y efecto. Esta relación "de que esto lleva a eso" se aprenden desde el momento del nacimiento. Nuestra tarea como padre es enseñarles a nuestros bebés esta sencilla formula causal y continuar estas lecciones a través de su infancia.

Empecemos con la sencilla lección de enseñarle a su bebé de como hacer ruido. Tome un pequeño cascabel o campana y átelo a una corta distancia de su bebé. Asegúrese que su bebé puede verlo. Tome la mano de su bebé y levántela lentamente hasta tocar el cascabel.

Si Ud. repite esto unas pocas veces el bebé rápidamente aprenderá la relación y hará el sonido (y debo agregar que lo hará con gran regocijo). Al poco rato, su bebé estará tocando los "tambores" (o cualquier cosa que haga ruido cuando se pega con la mano o un palo). A medida que los bebés crecen y pueden arrastrarse (o caminar), les da gran placer arrastrar objetos que producen ruido.

A los bebés también les gusta empujar pelotas de colores fuertes en el piso. Esto puede llevar a una temprana versión de "jugar a la pelota" donde un padre e hijo impulsan la pelota hacia si mismos. Asegúrese de hacer un gran espectáculo del hecho que su bebé está haciendo que algo ocurra.

Muchas de estas actividades son muy ruidosas, Los padres pueden cansarse de hacerlas pero estos juegos son vitales para impartir pensamiento "waypower" a su descendencia. Si los ruidos de cacerolas, de bloques que caen, pelotas que rebotan, y elogios paternales llenan su hogar, entonces es probable que el pensamiento "waypower" se está aprendiendo.

Los bebés de más edad están absolutamente fascinados con las lecciones

"waypower" de "esto lleva a eso" y la infame pregunta "por qué"?. Desde nuestra perspectiva de adultos, pudiese parecer , que los pequeños apenas le prestan atención a nuestras respuestas con sus interminables preguntas "por qué"? Sin embargo, están escuchando. Estas preguntas son extremadamente importantes para los pequeños que son una especie de esponjas humanas a medida que absorben información causal de vínculos,

A medida que los niños crecen las lecciones de "waypower" continúan. Leerle a los niños les ayuda a aprender la secuencia de eventos en ciertos cuentos. El hilo conductor de los eventos en cualquier cuento es muy importante para la comprensión de los niños de la causalidad. Los niños rápidamente aprenden la trama de un cuento e incluso nos corregirán si nos saltamos una pagina (o una línea) cuando intentamos de apurar el rito de leer un cuento a la hora de dormir. Las rimas infantiles también son especialmente buenas para lecciones de secuencia de "esto conlleva a eso".

Otro importante juego de lecciones "waypower" se refiere a enseñarles a los niños a dividir la meta en pasos cortos que son fácil de lograr. Estas submetas nos dan una ruta a la meta final. Un enfoque a este proceso en etapas es preguntarle a su niño a declarar su meta en sus propias palabras. Ayúdela a ver los pasos que debe tomar. Después, concéntrese en enseñarle a su hija a tomar los primeros pasos para lograr la meta a largo plazo. Los niños de alta esperanza practican estos pasos a través de sus años de desarrollo y los continúan usando a través de su vida como adultos.

Finalmente, enséñele a sus niños que sus intentos infructuosos no quieren decir que son un fracaso o que no tienen talento. Sino que estas situaciones deben considerarse como una manera de obtener pistas sobre que vías no están funcionando. Trate de ayudarle a su hijo ver que las rutas infructuosas pueden dar información útil sobre otras vías que pueden funcionar.

Fuerza de Voluntad

Enseñar el pensamiento de fuerza de voluntad es similar a ser entrenador motivacional. Tome cada oportunidad para asegurarse que sus niños se den cuenta que ellos son los que hicieron que las cosas sucedan. Alabe a sus niños en cualquier momento en que demuestran determinación. Además, he aquí algunas técnicas basadas en la investigación y la práctica para impartir la determinación a sus niños.

Desde la edad de uno a dos, jueguen un juego que se llama "Quien Hizo Eso"? que los pequeños gozan especialmente. Supongamos que Ud. está jugando el juego de rodar la pelota de un lado a otro con su hija. Cuando su niña le devuelve la pelota Ud. pregunta, "Quien tiró la pelota"? La niña anunciará orgullosamente, "Isabel (o quienquiera que fuese el nombre de su hija) la tiró". O si la mamá le dice a Isabel, "Corramos a través de la pradera" (y lo hacen). "Quien estaba corriendo"? pregunta la mamá. Isabel mira perpleja y contesta, "La mamá". "Bien, y quien más estaba corriendo"? pregunta la mamá. ¡"Isabel"! exclama la niña. Cada vez que haga algo con su hija pequeña, pregúntele que papel jugaba.

Un juego similar es preguntarle a su niña que puede hacer. Una pequeñuela estará feliz de contarle sus proezas y las respuestas son abundantes: "Lucy, puedes _____ (saltar, correr, hablar, usar la pélela sola, sacarte los zapatos, tirar la pelota, etc.)."

Estos juegos de pequeñuelos se convierten en juegos de "crédito" para los niños más grandes. A través de la infancia dele crédito a sus niños por actividades que inician tanto como las actividades que continúan. Nunca de por sentado ninguno de los esfuerzos de sus niños - incluso levantarse para ir al colegio. En mi experiencia, los niños de baja esperanza perciben que sus padres nunca los elogian por ninguno de sus esfuerzos.

Otro enfoque para aumentar la fuerza de voluntad de sus niños es enseñarle a que se diga a si mismo "Yo puedo hacer esto" o "Yo mismo lo haré". Cassettes de audio y CDs son comunes en las vidas de nuestros niños. Ud. les puede sugerir que es tiempo de cambiar los cassettes internos de "No puedo" a una cinta nueva que diga "Yo puedo"...(o algún otro slogan de motivación que le sirva a su hijo). Si esta nueva voz surge, los niños experimentarán un aumento en su fuerza de voluntad.

A veces es tentador cuando estamos apurados (o cansados) decirle a su niño, "No puedes hacer eso" o "Yo lo haré". Esas declaraciones pueden contribuir a la voz "No puedo" en la mente de su niño. Deje a su niño ser la persona que hace cosas - incluso si eso significa que no obtendrá su objetivo en sus primeros intentos. Los mensajes "Yo puedo" engendran continuos pensamientos sobre intentar, que es la esencia del pensamiento de fuerza

de voluntad.

Quizás el fomento más fuerte para la fuerza de voluntad para nuestros niños es nuestro aliento. Al respaldar a nuestros hijos y al repetir nuestro aliento, los estamos ayudando a mantener su fuerza de voluntad para esos momentos cuando se necesita un extenso esfuerzo para lograr una meta deseada.

Afirmaciones como "Tu sabes que te apoyo" y "Tu puedes lograrlo" son animadoras. Ofrezca su apoyo, no importa la edad de su niño. Los espíritus de los niños suben cuando saben que sus padres los están apoyando y defendiendo cuando las cosas se ponen difíciles.

Qué otra cosa podemos hacer para ayudar a nuestros niños mantener su fuerza de voluntad antes las adversidades? Primero, enséñele a sus hijos que estar asediado es una parte normal de la vida. Ud. podría hablar sobre los momentos difíciles que enfrentó cuando era joven. Incluya algunos ejemplos cuando Ud. luchó infructuosamente y con éxito con un problema.

Un niño puede olvidarse darse crédito por su perseverancia en el pasado y su eventual éxito. Ud., puede repasar sus experiencias de esfuerzo y enseñarle como hacerlo como una manera de renovar su determinación. Otra lección de fuerza de voluntad es enseñarle a sus hijos a gozar el camino hacia sus metas tanto (y más) como realmente lograrlos. Al recalcar el proceso de perseguir las metas los niños están libres para pasarlo bien y gozar del "viaje".

Esta actitud sobre metas es mucho más alentadora que solo mirar los logros como la única parte que da satisfacción a sus aspiraciones. Los niños que solo focalizan en las metas frecuentemente tratan desesperadamente de no cometer errores. Sin embargo, una parte importante de aprender es estar dispuesto a tomar riesgos y cometer errores. En vez de alabar a su niño solo cuando logra sus metas, sugiero elogiar la disposición del niño a llevar a cabo tareas algo peligrosas, cometer errores, y tomar placer en el proceso de lograr metas.

Entregue su Tiempo

En las secciones previas, me he referido a como alentar la fijación de metas por parte de sus niños, y también el pensamiento "waypower" y de fuerza de voluntad. Pero hay una cosa más que es vital para la esperanza -*su tiempo*. En nuestros estudios, hemos preguntado a los jóvenes de alta y de baja esperanza que nos cuenten sobre su infancia. Quizás la cosa más asombrosa que descubrimos es que los que tenían alta esperanza tenían por lo menos un adulto que pasaba mucho tiempo con ellos durante sus años de desarrollo.

Contribuir nuestro tiempo significa aumentar las esperanzas de nuestro hijo. Esta es una simple pauta, pero los que somos padres quizás lo hemos olvidado en nuestras vidas tan ajetreadas. Nuestro legado de esperanza debe, por lo tanto, estar envuelto en innumerables horas con nuestros hijos,

Un Legado que Sigue Dando

La esperanza es el vínculo entre lo que somos hoy y el mañana mejor que está por llegar. Si practicamos un enfoque lleno de esperanza hacia nuestras vidas y le enseñamos a nuestros hijos a pensar con esperanza, ese camino hacia el futuro será maravilloso.

En algún punto de nuestras vidas, a todos nosotros quizás se nos dará la oportunidad de ver la línea de esperanza que viene de nuestros antecesores y que pasa a través nuestro hacia nuestros hijos. Si Ud. está parado en un cerro en la mitad de Kansas o en una sima en una de nuestras gran ciudades, la esperanza nos da una línea al futuro colectivo de nuestros niños.

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Play Nicely Together

Using Sibling Fights to Teach "People" Skills

Danny poked baby Nathan in the stomach. When Nathan began to cry, Mom rushed over. She pulled Danny away from the baby, and said, "Stop that. You know not to hurt him. Hurting's bad. Go to your room for a time-out."

When Danny didn't go, Mom took Danny's hand and led him to his room. On the way, Danny cried, "I sorry. No time-out. Please, Mommy."

The more frequently Mom gave Danny a time-out, the more it seemed he bothered the baby.

Skills Kids Need to Get Along

Over the past several years many parents have asked me for ideas to deal with sibling issues. They often invoke sibling jealousy as an explanation, but it doesn't completely account for all the fights. In fact, some of the reasons children fight with their brothers and sisters are the same reasons children fight with their friends.

Parents can teach children the skills they need to be more socially competent. These skills won't entirely stop the quarrels, but they will enable children to work out their differences.

Why Kids Fight: A sense of belonging

For children, attention is a sign of belonging. Most children believe if they cannot get attention, they do not belong. They can, and will, compete for attention from any adult, including visitors to the house, and teachers in school.

When a new baby arrives, older children may feel excluded or unwanted. If they believe they shouldn't ask for attention, they may set up situations where they will get attention without asking for it.

Unfortunately, the quickest way to do that is usually to hurt a sibling. Strange as it seems, many children prefer negative attention (a time-out) to being ignored. They'll even break rules and anger their parents in order to get noticed.

What to do

Children need to know that it is okay to want attention. They need to learn how to be noticed and acknowledged in different ways and by different people.

Give your children messages that they belong. Actually tell your youngster "I like to be with you," "I'm glad you are my child."

Children need these messages *all the time*, not just once in a while.

Decide how you want your child to ask for attention. You can remind your youngster "Danny, when you need me, say "hug" and I will stop what I'm doing and give you a hug." You can reduce conflict by giving your older child regular time together with you each day. "When Nathan takes a nap we will have some special time."

An understanding of boundaries

Maria, age 2 1/2, wanted Rosa's doll. When Rosa, age 3 1/2, put it down for a moment, Maria grabbed it. Rosa screeched, "Give it to me!" Maria ignored her, and a battle over the doll began again.

From the time a baby is born she is learning about boundaries. She is discovering what is part of her and what is not part of her. The hands that wave in her face are hers. She can control them. Her father's hands are not part of her and she can't control them.

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This exploration eventually leads to the understanding of limits. The abilities to create healthy boundaries and respect other people's boundaries are essential parts of acting responsibly.

Children need to know that there are different kinds of boundaries and that these can change. They need to know that they are in charge of their boundaries. Finally, they need to learn strategies for dealing with boundaries.

What to do

Children need to learn that some things are theirs, but not everything. From a child's perspective, things in the world fall into three groups.

- **Always mine** includes objects like special toys, shoes, things that always belong to the child.

- **Not mine** are the things that clearly belong to someone else, like Mommy's glasses, Daddy's books, or a sibling's doll. These things have to be requested before the child can use them.

- **Sometimes mine** are the things that the child may use without asking, but so can other people. This category can include the living room sofa, blocks, the television, parents.

Parents need to help children learn which items belong to the child, which belong to siblings, and which to the family. One way to do this is to make family rules about boundaries, and insist that children respect the boundaries of others. Here are some rules you might want to consider:

- ✦ Stop when someone says, "Stop."
- ✦ Knock before you enter someone's room
- ✦ Ask before you use something that belongs to someone else.

Children need to know that they can control their own boundaries. If someone wants to tickle them, they can say either "Yes" or "No."

Give children words to establish their boundaries by stating them clearly, for example, "Don't poke me. It hurts," "I'm not done using the crayons."

Parents also need to respect their children's boundaries. When your toddler says "no more tickle," you have to stop tickling. Parents also need to model their own clear limits. For example, if your toddler hits your face say, "Touch gently" and turn him around so he can't hurt you. If he grabs your glasses, say, "My glasses" and stand up so he can't reach them.

Dealing with feelings

Some fights arise from children being unfamiliar with their emotions. Children need information about feelings -- what they are, and how they affect behavior. When they understand feelings, they can begin to respond to them appropriately.

Children need a vocabulary to describe their feelings and they need to know that feelings can change. They need to know the difference between feelings and actions, and they need strategies for dealing with feelings.

Finally, they also need to learn that other people have feelings.

What to do

Help your child develop a "feeling" vocabulary. Use words to describe your child's emotions, and those of other people. There are words for comfortable feelings (happy, excited) and uncomfortable feelings (angry, frustrated, bored). Children also need words for a range from mild to intense.

When children can name emotions, they can begin to think about them more effectively and can express their needs and wants. Parents can help by using feeling words with children, labeling and reflecting how their children feel.

Feelings are different from actions. Children need to know that emotions are neither good or bad. Emotions are simply the way children feel. Remind children that all feelings are okay. However, any actions that hurt people or things are not okay. For example you might say, "It's okay to feel frustrated, and it's not okay to hit someone." Or, "looks to me like you're bored. You need to find a better way to deal with boredom."

Emotions are tools that give kids information. Then the children can decide what to do with those feelings.

Parents can provide constructive ways to deal with those emotions, showing youngsters how to handle anger, sadness, and frustration. You can model calming down.

When things go wrong at home, you might say something like "I'm really angry. I'm going to take a walk right now. When I get back, I'll think about what I can do."

A child who is angry and hits another

child could have chosen a different action. He could have felt mad and stamped his feet, or called Dad or another adult. He could have reduced his anger by slowly taking and blowing out deep breaths.

You can clarify and remind children of the family rule "It's okay to be angry, and it's not okay to hit." Or, "deal with your own boredom, don't make it everyone's problem." Or, "You are responsible for what your body does, accident or not, so if you knock something over, you have to pick it up."

Control Issues

Many young children (and adults too) want to control their worlds. They get angry when they can't go to the beach, or a friend can't come over. They may scream and yell, but that will not affect the situation. Children need to learn that there are some things they can not change. No one can control everything (much as we might want to). But the one thing they can always control is the way they respond to the situation.

What to do

Children need skills to solve their interpersonal dilemmas and conflicts. Parents can model a problem-solving process, and work with youngsters to use it.

Resolving Children's Quarrels

→ *Revisiting Danny and Nathan*

What are some of the possible ways Mom could have responded to that situation?

Think STAR.

Stop and focus

What's really going on? Danny may be feeling left out. He was used to having Mom's complete attention and now he has very little. Whenever he pokes the baby, Mom or Dad comes running.

Think of ideas

First, think of as many ideas as you can, not just the ones you think will work best.

This will give you possibilities to hold in reserve in case you need them.

Clearly the time-outs weren't working. The payoff was the attention, and the time-outs were the price Danny paid to get that attention.

Instead, perhaps Mom could notice and reward Danny's gentle behavior, or suggest ways he could ask for attention ("Danny, when you need me, just say 'hug' and I'll stop what I am doing and give you a big hug."). Mom can also model ways to request attention from her children ("Danny, may I have a big kiss?").

Since Danny seems to be feeling displaced by his younger brother Mom can help Danny express his feelings verbally. "Sometimes you feel left out when you are playing alone and I'm taking care of the baby." Mom and Dad can then make sure they give him regular attention every day.

Mom can also remind Danny of the rule "touch gently," when he's with the baby.

Act effectively

Put some of these ideas into action. Mom may decide to teach Danny how to ask for attention directly, and when he does to give him a hug immediately. At the same time, she may institute consistent one-on-one attention every day. Finally, at least for a while, mom may decide not leave the two children alone together.

Review and revise

After about a week, think about how things are going. If there is no improvement, try other solutions.

→ *Revisiting Maria and Rosa.*

Stop and focus

When the girls fight, their father may think "They are still little, and are just beginning to learn about property rights. I want Maria to wait for permission, and I would like Rosa to let Maria use her things occasionally."

Think of ideas

Here again, think of as many ideas as possible. Dad can shape Maria's behavior by encouraging her to ask for something and then to wait for it.

He can encourage Rosa to share the doll. He can remind them both of the rule "You must get permission before you use someone else's toy."

The children can also learn that not everything has to be shared, and perhaps that doll is one of those special toys. If the doll is special, Dad can acknowledge Rosa's feelings about sharing this toy. "Sometimes we feel scared when someone wants to borrow one of our special things."

Act effectively

Dad may decide that he wants Maria to know that there are some things that aren't hers. She must ask for them and respect the answer.

He'll encourage that behavior by praising Maria when she asks. If Rosa won't give Maria the doll Dad will ask Rosa to get another doll or toy for Maria.

Review and revise

If that doesn't work, he'll try some of the other ideas.

Children need parents who see them as unique, capable, and loveable individuals. This is true whether the children have siblings or not. Much of the challenging behavior that children exhibit reflects their developmental stage, rather than the existence of a sibling.

When you teach children the skills they need quarrels will not stop entirely, but children will have the skills to work out their differences. These skills will be useful with siblings and friends now, and with other people later on in life.

Elizabeth Crary has been a parent educator for more than 20 years, writing over 30 books that include "Without Spanking or Spoiling," "Pick Up Your Socks, the Dealing with Feelings" series, and the "Children's Problem Solving Books." She lives in Seattle with her husband and two children. The information for this article comes from her book "Help! The Kids Are at It Again," Parenting Press, Inc. P O Box 75267; Seattle, Washington 98125. Phone: 800-992-6657

Helping Kids Adjust to Siblings

New baby coming into the family? Here are some things to keep in mind.

Signs of Jealousy

Your child will probably let you know if he is starting to become jealous. Here are some of the signs.

Monopolizing your attention. As soon as you go to take care of the baby your child decides she has to go to the potty, is very thirsty, or has been bothered by an unhappy thought.

Brutal honesty. Other children will tell you straight out, "I don't want the baby any more," or similar indications that the baby is getting something that your older child wants, or considers his: "That's my favorite song, don't sing it to her."

Imitating the baby. Some kids regress. They want to sleep in the crib, have apparently forgotten that they were ever toilet trained, even drink from a bottle, or nurse at your breast.

Easing the Way

Whether or not your youngster is showing his or her unhappiness over the baby, think about trying some of these suggestions.

How Big You Are

It's one of the few advantages your child will have as the new baby takes over the clothes, crib, and attention of family and friends. Go through the old baby pictures with a "then and now" theme. It could go something like this: "Oh, here you are lying in your crib. You were so cute, but you couldn't do very much. Now, you can ..."

If your youngster wants to get into the game, you can set it up with things your child couldn't do before: "When you were little you couldn't... ." He can answer with "I can do that now."

Advantages of Being Older

Is there something your child has wanted but you've told her she's too young? Perhaps you can rethink some of those decisions and let her do or own something that really shows how big she is.

Keep Things as Consistent as Possible

Much will change when a new baby arrives. Your older child might have to share a room. You may not be able to have some of the same special times you shared with your child. To the extent you can, preserve the rituals that you and your youngster enjoyed -- special reading time, bath time play, making dinner together.

If your children will now be sharing a room, try to preserve as much of the original arrangement as possible. Let your child make decisions about furniture arrangement, decorations -- even if it means half the room has different color walls.

Sometimes the Problem is Real

Some of the things, mixed in with all the other complaints, will be about something real, something you need to address. If the baby wakes up your child at night, or has been sick so you've had to ignore the older child, you can acknowledge the problem and work out a solution. Don't dismiss all problems as "sibling stuff," some of those issues can and should be resolved.

How Did You Feel

As a little exercise, think back to when you were a child. If you are the older sibling, how did you feel when the newcomer showed up? If you are a younger sibling, ask your sister and brother about their feelings. It might help you gain a new perspective.

Neala Schwartzberg, PhD

Lead Poisoning: Questions & Answers

Despite a trend towards lower levels of lead in the bloodstream of children, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), lead remains a common and preventable environmental health threat. They estimate that almost 1 million children in the US have elevated levels of lead in their blood.

Where does the lead come from?

One common source of lead is paint. According to the AAP, homes built before the late 1940s and early 1950s often have lead-based paint. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that over 80 percent of all homes built before 1978 in the US have lead-based paint. The older the house, the more likely it is to contain this paint, and a higher concentration of lead in the paint.

This becomes a particular problem when the paint has begun to peel and flake. Dust as well as paint chips can contain lead. Hobby materials and older painted toys and antique furniture such as cribs can also be a source of lead. Other potential sources include tap water in homes that have lead pipes and even mini-blinds manufactured outside the United States before July, 1996.

Ironically, "lead" pencils are not a source of lead. There is no actual lead in pencils or in the paint on the outside of pencils.

Who is at risk?

Lead exposure is a continuing problem in low-income urban communities. It can also occur in rural areas and higher income areas if the homes contain lead paint.

Age is also a crucial factor. Very young children touch everything and then put their hands in their mouths. They crawl along the floor where paint dust accumulates. If there is lead and lead dust in the house, these young ones are more likely than older children to end up with it in their bodies.

The AAP notes that age and condition of housing are the best predictors of lead poisoning. Regardless of income or location, chipping paint, window frames and sills in poor condition are the real risk factors.

Why is lead so bad?

Lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and decreases in intellectual functioning. At very high levels it can even cause seizures and coma. But new research conducted among school-age children suggests harmful effects of lead even at low levels, lower than the official cutoff.

Researchers at Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati found that lead has adverse effects at concentrations in the blood that are lower than currently considered acceptable. These more subtle effects include defects in reading, math, and short-term memory.

Research at the University of Pittsburgh found that delinquent youths had a significantly higher concentration of lead in their bones compared to the control group of nondelinquent youths. Although this doesn't prove that lead caused these behavior problems (both exposure and delinquent behavior could be the result of other factors) it is consistent with other research suggesting that even low levels of lead can contribute to behavior problems.

Finally, most children with high levels of lead don't show any noticeable problems, until they go to school. Then, they begin to have learning and behavior difficulties.

What to do?

Toxicity is a function of the dose, duration of exposure and vulnerability of the child. Talk to your family doctor about the risks of lead poisoning for your child and how you can minimize exposure. Screening tests can determine the amount of lead in your child's blood. Your pediatrician can help you help your child.

Dear Reader

Sibling rivalry. Sibling issues. Sometimes we forget that the relationship our children have with each other can reflect the common every-day battles and disagreements that all children have -- with peers as well as with siblings. In this month's feature Elizabeth Crary shows us how to use sibling disagreements to help children learn people skills, how to get along with all children, not only a sister or brother. If your child doesn't have siblings, keep these situations in mind, they will pop up during play with other kids, and you'll be ready!

Also in this issue we talk about introducing a new baby in the family, and books to help children with this transition. Our health corner talks about a potential danger in the house that parents often don't consider – lead poisoning. Family time ideas and our "it's a multi-cultural world" books round-up another packed issue.

Neala Schwartzberg

Winter Wonder-Land?

It's February and it's winter. There isn't much we can do about that. There's something a little daunting about those short, dark days and long winter nights stretching from New Years to the first day of spring. So, we've come up with some ways to help everyone avoid those winter doldrums and celebrate the season.

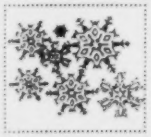
Bringing the Snow Inside

Even if you live in a part of the country where you don't see any snow in the winter, this project will help you enjoy a snowy day. You will need:

- 1 bag of styrofoam snow flakes (these can be found in craft stores)
- 1 large paper bag
- flour and water paste
- a large basin
- some fallen branches from trees or bushes
- pine cones, berries, ribbons or other decorations

Mix a fairly dense flour and water paste in the large basin. Start with two cups of flour and slowly add about 3/4 cup of cold water; mix. Dip a small piece of branch into the mixture. The paste should coat the branch but not drip excessively.

Dip the branches one by one in the paste and immediately place in the paper bag. Sprinkle the styrofoam snowflakes into the bag over the top of the branch and, holding the paper bag closed at the top, shake to coat the branches with the snowflakes. Arrange the snow-covered branches in a vase and tie with a ribbon (you can add a pine cone or some holly berries to the arrangement). This is how you bring the snow inside.



Snowflakes that Never Melt

This project is always fun. Kids can be creative and parents can help the little ones use the scissors and hang their creations. You will need:

- Square sheets of paper (use white, silver, grey, or gold)
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Glitter or glue (optional)
- String or silver thread

Fold paper in half, in half again, and then into a triangle. Draw a design on the triangle and cut it out remembering not to cut completely through the folds. Unfold the cut paper and decorate with glitter if desired. Hang the snowflakes around the house. (Tip: You can use a wire coathanger and hang three or four snowflakes at different lengths from the hanger like a mobile.)

Winter Story Time

Never underestimate the power of storytime during those long winter evenings. How about making one evening a week for special family activities that center around story telling? First set aside about fifteen minutes of quiet time for each family member to think about a story. You can offer a theme such as "The Old West" or "Superheroes". Then each family member tells part of the story. As it is being told, mom or dad writes it down and when it is finished, reads it back to the family. If you do the story long enough and it goes on and on, it will become pretty hilarious. Save the stories and re-read them a few months later to the family. It will be even funnier as each member of the family adds their reminiscences and comments.

Another storytime idea is for a parent to simply tell a traditional fairy tale - such as Goldilocks. Remember: the little ones haven't heard these stories so even if they seem stale to adults, they will be amazing to the kids. Then ask family members to take specific roles and act it out.

And, of course, don't forget to read to your children - this is one activity they always love. Trips to the library tie into this as each child is allowed to choose one book for story night.

So there we have it. A few ideas to help us all get from winter to spring. Just remember, there is no season of the year in which we can't get children and family together, having fun.

Happy winter!

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

More Winter Family Fun

Sharing good times together can strengthen family bonds. The key is to have fun -- as a family.

Family Game Night

Play board games the whole family can enjoy. In fact, make a day of it by going to the store and buying something the family can play. It doesn't have to be expensive, some games are both fun and reasonably priced.

Family Video Night

For families who aren't big on games, rent a video appropriate for the whole family and pop the popcorn.

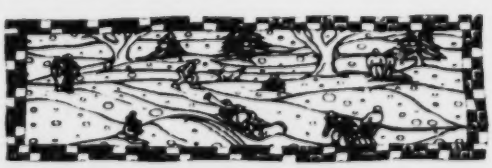
Family Sing-Alongs

This may sound corny, but it can be lots of fun. If someone can play a musical instrument, sing along with the words. Or, put on a favorite CD or tape and sing family songs.

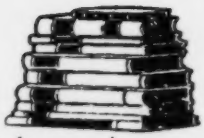
Look What I Can Do

If you have a video camera, make a tape of the kids doing their tricks. Magic tricks, acts of physical dexterity, singing, whatever your kids do well (or even so-so) put it on tape.

If you don't have a camera, set aside time on a regular basis for your children to display their latest skill. Juggling, magic, songs and skits - why not start a family talent night?



Library Resources



Sibling Books

📖 ***Elana's Ears (or how I became the best big sister in the world)*** by Gloria Roth Lowell; illustrated by Karen Stormer Brooks; Magination Press: American Psychological Association; Washington, DC; 2000; Softcover. Told from the point of view of Lacey the dog, who is at quite put out about the new baby. But Lacey gradually realizes that baby Elana has a hearing problem. He becomes her ears until Mom and Dad arrange for a hearing aid. Also includes information for parents on how to introduce a new baby into the family.

📖 ***I'd Rather Have an Iguana*** by Heidi Stetson Mario; Talewinds: Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown MA, 1999; Hardcover, $14.95. The little girl was less than thrilled when her parents brought home her new baby brother: "They said it's my baby, too. I'd rather have an iguana." This book isn't about how to introduce a baby -- her parents seem to do several things wrong. Instead it allows the reader to see another child feeling unhappy, displaced, and jealous. And then, coming to see that life eventually settles down and the child and baby can become friends.

📖 ***On Mother's Lap*** by Ann Herbert Scott; illustrated by Glo Coalson; Clarion Books, New York, 1992; Boardbook, $4.95. A young Eskimo boy sits on his mother's lap as she rocks back and forth. Gradually, he adds his toys, his blanket, and the puppy. Finally, his baby sister wakes up and joins them, all wrapped up together in the blanket rocking back and forth. Michael says that it feels good and his mother replies that "...there is always room on Mother's lap."

📖 ***When I am a Sister*** by Robin Ballard; Greenwillow Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $15.00. This book presents a stepfamily situation; the summer spent with her father and stepmother is over, and things will soon be changing. They are having a baby, but her father reassures her of all the things that will remain the same, and the change that means she will now be somebody's sister.

Family Activities

📖 ***The Best Paper Airplanes You'll Ever Fly***, Klutz, Palo Alto, CA, 1998; Laminated pamphlet. Complete fold and fly instructions for three designs. All you need is paper. Lots of fun and they do fly!

📖 ***The Fantastic Foam Book***, Klutz, Palo Alto, CA, 1998; Kit $14.95. This isn't for children under the age of three -- the kit contains many small pieces of foam. However, older children and adults will have a blast creating faces, animals, buildings and just lots of stuff. Contains precut foam pieces, large pieces to cut into your own shapes, instructions for dozens of creations. Supply your own scissors and glue.

📖 ***Flower Fairies Flower Press Kit***, illustrated by Cicely Mary Barker, F. Warne & Co., New York, 1999; Kit $15.00. Although developed for older children, this can be a fun activity for a nature-loving family. The kit includes flower press and instruction book, describing some popular flowers, how to collect flowers, and several ideas on ways to make different crafts.

Multicultural

All the Colors of the Earth by Sheila Hamanaka; Mulberry Books; New York, 1999; Softcover $4.95. "Children come in all the colors of the earth -- the roaring browns of bears and soaring eagles," starts this lyrical and gentle book with luminous warm illustrations. We are all the children of the earth, "dark as leopard spots, light as sand." A wonderful warm book.

📖 ***Chicken Sunday*** by Patricia Polacco; PaperStar Books; New York, 1992; Softcover, $6.99. Polacco has a wonderful ability to take moments from her childhood and turn them into moving life lessons, in this case racial and religious tolerance. The grandmother has seen the Easter hat of her dreams. The children want to talk to the hat maker but they arrive immediately after his shop has been pelted by eggs in an act of anti-semitism. It all ends well, with the reader learning about friendship, honor, kindness.

📖 ***Hooray, A Pinata!*** by Elisa Kleven; Puffin Books; New York, 1996; Softcover $5.99. Clara is going to have a pinata birthday party. She picks out a colorful pinata in the form of a puppy. But Clara falls in love with her new dog and doesn't want it to be used as a pinata and broken apart for the candy inside. Her friend Samson saves the day, buying her a thundercloud pinata for the party.

📖 ***I'm Like You, You're Like Me: A child's book about understanding and celebrating each other*** by Cindy Gainer; Free Spirit Publishing; Minneapolis, 1998; Softcover $10.95. A book about how children are alike and different. Gentle text and colorful illustrations encourage children to see not only the similarities and differences, but also to understand and discuss feeling accepted and valued, kindness and cooperation and other crucial values. There is also a 72-page leader's guide (softcover $16.95) focusing on developing tolerance and appreciation for diversity. It comes with 20 lessons, follow-up tips, and home handouts.

📖 ***Sacred Places*** by Philemon Sturges; illustrated by Files Larouche; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York, 2000; Hardcover, $16.00. Everywhere in the world there are sacred places for people to gather and either worship or meditate. These places, depicted in beautifully crafted paper cut illustrations, include those sacred to Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, and Muslims

» » *Continued Page 8*

Library Resources

» » *Continued from Page 7*

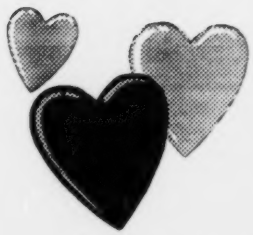
from all over the world.

📖 ***The Trip Back Home*** by Janet S. Wong; illustrated by Bo Jia; Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, 2000; Hardcover, $16.00. A young girl and her mother go back to Korea to visit family. They live a simple rural life feeding the animals, going to the market, listening to stories in the evening. They have brought gifts of goods, work gloves, apron, pictured books in English but when they leave, they have received gifts too. A charcoal drawing of the hills, a poem in Korean and dried persimmons strung together in a necklace.

Audio: ***Mariposa*** by Juanita Newland-Ulloa; Canta Conmigo Family Music Series; CD $17. Mariposa means butterfly and these gentle songs are soft as butterfly wings. There are lullabies and interpretations of traditional songs and music with a Latin flair. A lovely compilation for the whole family. Also available through Ulloa Productions at 510 632-6296 and their website: www.juanitamusic.com

Know Someone Who's Expecting a Baby?

If someone you know is soon to be a parent, there is no better baby gift than a subscription to *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*. We will send a gift announcement in your name to the expectant parents. Send your check for $32, your name and address, and your designee's name and address to *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*; 480 Old Westbury Rd.; Roslyn Hgts., NY 11577-2215.



Valentine Books of Love

In celebration of Valentine's Day, here is a small sampling of some very special "books of love." Parents, share these books with your children and watch as their faces light up!

♥ ***Baby Dance*** by Ann Taylor; pictures by Marjorie van Heerden; HarperFestival; New York, 1999; Board book, $5.95. A mother falls asleep on the couch and while she naps the father happily dances his little girl baby around the room.

♥ ***Good Job, Little Bear*** by Martin Waddell; illustrated by Barbara Firth; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. Little bear wants to go exploring. He wants to climb rocks, bounce on bendy trees, and hop from stone to stone in the river. Big Bear always tells him he's done a good job. But from time to time Little Bear also gets into trouble, and is always rescued by Big Bear, who'll always be there for Little Bear.

♥ ***My Monster Mama Loves Me So*** by Laura Leuck; illustrated by Mark Buehner; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, 1999; Hardcover $16.00. A little monster (complete with three eyes and green fur) describes how he knows his mother loves him. She tickles his pointy toes and combs the cobwebs from his bangs. She takes him to the swamp to swim. When the scary human children come she shows him how to disappear. Finally, she tucks him into bed.

♥ ***No Matter What*** by Debi Gliori; Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA, 1999; Hardcover $16.00. The story of Small and Large, and Small is feeling grim and grumpy. But Large assures Small that no matter what "I'll always love you." Then, Small starts with a list of conditions -- if Small was a squishy bug, or perhaps love wears out or breaks. Large may be far away. Whatever the situation, Large assures Small "It's like that with love -- we may be close, we may be far, but our love still surrounds us ... wherever we are."

♥ ***On a Wintry Morning*** by Dori Chaconas; illustrated by Stephen T. Johnson; Viking; New York, 2000; Hardcover, $15.99. A beautiful lyrical book of a father and child on a cold winter morning. They make snow angels and see the wild geese fly by. When they come inside Daddy blows on her toes to warm them. Finally, they cuddle and baby takes a nap.

♥ ***You're Just What I Need*** by Ruth Krauss; pictures by Julia Noonan; HarperCollins Publishers; New York 1998. This is a classic book originally written in 1951 with newly added warm illustrations of a mother and child playing a guessing game. The young child is hiding in a bundle and mother is asking is it a bundle of laundry, a bunch of carrots. Maybe it's a mop? "No," the bundle always replies. Finally, the child pops out "It's me!" And the mother replies that "you're just what I need."

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Jueguen Juntos Amigablemente

Cómo Usar las Riñas entre Hermanos Para Enseñar Habilidades "Humanas"

Daniel le pegó al pequeño Antonio en el estómago. Cuando Antonio se puso a llorar, la mamá corrió a ver que pasaba. Ella separó a Antonio del bebé y le dijo, "Dejen de hacer eso. Tu sabes que no puedes pegarle. Pegar es malo. Andate a tu habitación para una penitencia". (Time Out)

Cuando Daniel no se fue, la mamá tomó la mano de Daniel y se lo llevó a su habitación. Durante el trayecto Daniel gritó, "Lo siento. No quiero penitencia. Por favor, mamá".

Mientras más frecuentemente la mamá le daba penitencia a Daniel más parecía que molestaba al bebé.

Las Habilidades Que Los Niños Necesitan Para Poder Entenderse Entre Ellos

Durante los últimos años muchos padres me han pedido ideas para enfrentar problemas entre hermanos. Frecuentemente invocan celos entre hermanos a modo de explicación, pero eso no explica completamente todas las peleas entre ellos. De hecho, algunas de las razones por que los niños pelean con sus hermanos y hermanas son las mismas razones por las cuales pelean con sus amigos. Los padres pueden enseñarle a sus hijos las habilidades que necesitan para ser más socialmente competentes. Estas habilidades no detendrán los altercados completamente, pero si le permitirán a los niños a resolver sus diferencias.

Por qué Pelean los Niños: Una Sentimiento de Pertenencia

Para los niños la atención es un signo de pertenencia. La mayoría de los niños creen que si no pueden obtener atención, no pertenecen. Ellos pueden, y competirán por la atención de cualquier adulto, incluyendo las visitas que vienen a la casa y los maestros de la escuela.

Cuando llega un nuevo bebé, los niños de más edad pueden sentirse

excluidos o no queridos. Si creen que no deben pedir atención es posible que creen situaciones donde obtengan esa atención sin pedirla. Desafortunadamente la manera más rápida de hacerlo es, generalmente, lastimando a un hermano. Aunque parezca extraño, muchos niños prefieren la atención negativa (penitencia) a ser ignorados. Incluso desobedecerán las reglas y hacen que se enojen los padres para que los noten.

Que Se Puede Hacer?

Los niños tienen que saber que está bien querer atención. Tienen que aprender a como ser notados y reconocidos de distintas maneras por distintas personas.

Dele a sus niños mensajes que pertenecen. Dígale a su hijo "Me gusta estar contigo", "Me encanta que seas mi hijo/hija". Los niños necesitan estos mensajes todo el tiempo, no solo de vez en cuando.

Decida como quiere que su hijo pida atención. Ud. puede recordarle a su pequeñuelo "Daniel, cuando me necesites, di "abrazo" y yo dejaré lo que estoy haciendo y te daré un abrazo". Ud. puede disminuir los conflictos dándole a su hijo mayor un tiempo habitual con Ud. todos los días. "Cuando Antonio duerma la siesta nosotros tendremos un momento especial".

Comprendiendo los

Limites

María, de dos años y medio, quería la muñeca de Rosa. Cuando Rosa, de tres y medio, la dejó a un lado momentáneamente, María la agarró. Rosa gritó, ¡"Dámela"! María la ignoró y así comenzó una batalla por la muñeca.

Desde que nace un bebé ella está aprendiendo sobre los límites. Está descubriendo que es parte de ella y qué no lo es. Las manos que se mueven ante su cara son de ella. Ella las puede controlar. Las manos de su padre no son parte de ella y ella no puede controlarlas.

Esta exploración eventualmente lleva a una comprensión sobre los límites.
Las habilidades de crear confines sanos y respetar los límites de otras personas son una parte esencial del portarse responsablemente.

Los niños tienen que saber que hay distintos tipos de límites y que estos pueden cambiar. Tienen que saber que ellos manejan sus límites. Finalmente, tienen que aprender estrategias para encarar los confines entre ellos y otras personas.

Que Se Puede Hacer

Los niños tienen que aprender que algunas cosas son propias -pero no todo. Desde la perspectiva de un niño, las cosas del mundo caen en tres distintas categorías.

Lo siempre mío incluye objetos como juguetes especiales, zapatos, cosas que siempre le pertenecen al niño.

Lo no mío son las cosas que claramente le pertenecen a otra persona, como las gafas de mamá , los libros de papá o la muñeca de una hermana. Estas cosas tienen que ser pedidas antes de que el niño las pueda usar.

A veces mías son las cosas que el niño puede usar sin tener que pedir permiso, pero las otras personas también. Esta categoría puede incluir el sofá del salón, bloques, la televisión, los padres.

Los padres tienen que enseñarle a los niños a saber qué cosas le pertenecen al niño, qué le pertenece a los hermanos, y qué le pertenece a la familia. Una manera de hacer esto es hacer reglas familiares sobre límites e insistir que los niños respeten los límites de otros. He aquí algunas reglas que valen la pena tener en cuenta: Pare cuando alguien dice, "Pare". Toque la puerta antes de entrar a la habitación de otra persona. Pida permiso antes de usar algo que le pertenece a otra persona.

Los niños deben saber que pueden controlar sus propios límites. Si alguien quiere hacerle cosquillas, ellos pueden decir o "Si" o "No". Dele a los niños las palabras para establecer sus límites enunciándolas claramente. Por ejemplo, "No me pegues. Me duele", "No he terminado de usar los lápices".

Los padres también tienen que respetar los límites de sus hijos. Cuando un pequeñuelo dice "No más cosquillas", Ud. tiene que dejar de hacerle cosquillas. Los padres también deben crear sus propios límites claros. Por ejemplo, si su pequeñuelo le pega en la cara diga, "Toca suavemente" y delo vuelta para que no lo lastime. Si le agarra las gafas diga, "Mis anteojos" y párese para que no los pueda alcanzar.

Enfrentando los Sentimientos

Algunas riñas surgen porque los niños desconocen sus propios sentimientos. Los niños necesitan información sobre los sentimientos -qué son y cómo afectan su conducta. Una vez que entienden los sentimientos, pueden empezar a responder a ellos apropiadamente.

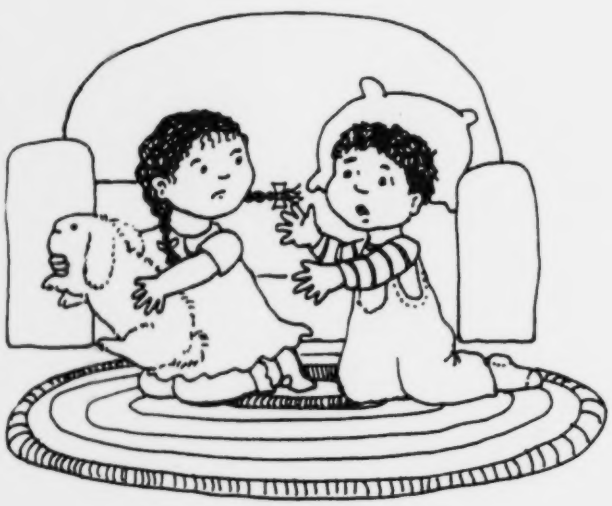
Los niños necesitan un vocabulario para describir sus sentimientos y tienen que saber que los sentimientos pueden cambiar. Tienen que saber la diferencia entre sentimientos y acciones, y necesitan estrategias para enfrentar sus sentimientos. Finalmente, también tienen que aprender que las otras personas también tienen sentimientos.

Qué se puede hacer.

Ayúdele a su niño a desarrollar un vocabulario de "sentimientos". Use palabras para describir las emociones de su niño y los de otras personas. Hay palabras para sentimientos agradables (felicidad, entusiasmo) y sentimientos desagradables (rabia, frustración, aburrimiento). Los niños también necesitan palabras para categorías desde leve a intensa.

Cuando los niños pueden nombrar emociones pueden empezar a pensar más eficazmente sobre ellas y pueden expresar sus necesidades y deseos. Los padres pueden ayudar usando palabras que describen sentimientos con los niños, describiendo y reflejando lo que sienten los niños.

Los sentimientos son distintos de las acciones. Los niños tienen que saber que las emociones no son ni buenas ni malas. Las emociones son simplemente la manera en que sienten los niños. Recuérdele a los niños que todos los sentimientos son buenos. Sin embargo, cualquier acción que lastima a las personas y a



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las cosas no son buenos. Por ejemplo, Ud. puede decir, "Está bien sentirse frustrado, pero no está bien pegarle a alguien". O, "Me da la impresión que estás aburrido. Necesitas encontrar una mejor manera de manejar el aburrimiento".

Las emociones son herramientas que le dan información a los niños. Después los niños pueden decidir que hacer con esos sentimientos.

Los padres pueden enseñar maneras constructivas para manejar esas emociones, demostrándoles como enfrentar la ira, pena, y frustración. Uno puede ser un modelo para calmarse. Cuando las cosas no andan bien en el hogar, Ud. puede decir algo como "Estoy muy enojado. Ahora voy a salir a caminar. Cuando vuelva, pensaré sobre que puedo hacer".

Un niño que está enojado y le pega a otro niño podría haber optado por una acción distinta. Podría sentirse enojado y haber pateado el piso o haber llamado a papá o a otro adulto. Podría haber disminuido su ira respirando profundamente.

Ud. puede esclarecer y recordarle a los niños de la regla familiar "Está bien enojarse, pero no está bien pegar". O, "Enfrenta tu aburrimiento y no lo hagas el problema de todos". O, "Tu eres responsable de lo que hace tu cuerpo, ya sea un accidente o no, a si que si botas algo, tu tendrás que recogerlo".

Problemas de control

Muchos niños pequeños (y también adultos) quieren controlar sus palabras. Se enojan cuando no pueden ir a la playa o un amigo no puede venir a la casa. Quizás griten y chillen, pero eso no afectará la situación. Los niños tienen que aprender que hay algunas cosas que no pueden cambiar. Nadie puede controlar todo (a pesar que nos gustaría). Pero la cosa que si pueden controlar siempre es la manera en que responden a la situación.

Que se puede hacer. Los niños necesitan habilidades para resolver sus problemas y conflictos interpersonales. Los padres pueden hacer un modelo de un proceso para resolver problemas y hacer que los niños lo usen.

Resolviendo las Disputas de los Niños

Una Nueva Visita a Daniel y Antonio

Cuales son algunas de las maneras posibles que la Mamá podía haber respondido a esa situación? Piense sobre estas pautas usando PPAR.

Pare y enfoque. Que realmente está sucediendo? Quizás Daniel se siente un poco olvidado. Estaba acostumbrado a tener la completa atención de su Mamá y ahora tiene muy poca. Cada vez que le pega al bebé, la mamá y el papá llegan corriendo.

Piense en ideas. Primero, piense en todas las ideas que pueda, no solamente las que Ud. cree que funcionarán mejor. Esto le permitirá tener posibilidades que puede mantener en reserva en caso que las necesite.

Claramente las penitencias no estaban funcionando. El pago era la atención y las suspensiones era el precio que pagaba Daniel para obtener atención.

Tal vez la mamá podría prestarle atención a Daniel y recompensar su conducta tranquila o sugerir maneras en que podría pedir atención. ("Daniel, cuando me necesites sólo di 'abrazo' y yo dejaré lo que estoy haciendo y te daré un gran abrazo".) La mamá también puede modelar maneras para solicitar atención de sus niños ("Daniel, me darías un gran beso"?).

Ya que Daniel parece sentirse desplazado por su hermano menor, la mamá puede ayudar a Daniel a expresar sus sentimientos verbalmente. "A veces te sientes abandonado cuando estas jugando solo y yo estoy cuidando al bebé". La mamá y el papá pueden asegurarse que le prestan atención todos los días.

La mamá también puede recordarle a Daniel de la regla de "tocar suavemente" cuando está con el bebé.

Actúe efectivamente. Ponga algunas de estas ideas en acción. La mamá quizás decida enseñarle a Daniel cómo pedir atención directamente y cuando lo haga darle inmediatamente un gran abrazo. Al mismo tiempo, ella puede instaurar atención exclusiva consistentemente. Finalmente, por lo menos por un tiempo, la mamá puede decidir no dejar juntos a los niños solos.

Repase y modifique. Después de una semana, piense sobre como van las cosas. Si no hay mejoría intente otras soluciones.

Una Nueva Visita a María y Rosa

Pare y enfoque. Cuando las niñas pelean, su padre puede pensar "Todavía son pequeñas y recién están aprendiendo sobre derechos de propiedad. Yo quiero que María espere y pida permiso y me gustaría que Rosa deje a María a usar sus cosas ocasionalmente".

Piense en ideas. Una vez más, piense sobre el

máximo de ideas posible. El papá puede conformar la conducta de María alentándola a pedir algo y que tenga que esperar.

El puede alentar a Rosa a compartir su muñeca. Puede recordarle a ambas de la regla "Te tienen que dar permiso antes de usar los juguetes de otro".

Los niños también pueden aprender que no todo tiene que ser compartido y quizás esa muñeca es uno de esos juguetes especiales. Si la muñeca es especial, el papá puede reconocer los sentimientos de Rosa sobre compartir el juguete. "A veces sentimos temor cuando alguien quiere pedir prestado una de nuestras cosas favoritas".

Actúe efectivamente. El papá puede decidir que quiere que María sepa que hay algunas cosas que no son de ella. Ella debe pedir permiso y respetar la respuesta. El alentará esa conducta alabando a María cuando la pide. Si Rosa no quiere darle a María la muñeca el papá le pedirá a Rosa que le traiga otra muñeca o juguete a María.

Repase y modifique. Si eso no funciona, él intentará algunas de las otras ideas.

Los niños necesitan padres que los ven como personas únicas, capaces y dignas de ser amadas. Esto es verdad aunque los niños no tengan hermanos. Mucha de la conducta desafiante que los niños demuestran reflejan su etapa de desarrollo y no la existencia de un hermano. Cuando Ud. le enseña a los niños las habilidades que necesitan, las riñas no terminarán completamente, pero los niños tendrán las habilidades para poder superar sus diferencias.

Estas habilidades serán útiles ahora con los hermanos y amigos y con otras personas más adelante en la vida.

Elizabeth Crary ha sido educadora de padres por más de 20 años, escribiendo más de 30 libros que incluyen, "Without Spanking or Spoiling", "Pick Up Your Socks," la serie "Dealing with Feelings, and Children's Problem Solving" Books. Ella vive en Seattle con su marido y dos niños. La información para este artículo es de su libro Help! The Kids Are at It Again, Parenting Press, Inc. P.O. Box 75267, Seattle, Washington 98125.

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NEWSLETTER

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Temperament

Spend a few minutes watching children on the playground, in the preschool, or even in your own kitchen and you'll notice that each child reacts differently to people, objects, and events.

When going to day care for the first time, some children can't wait to go in and play with the toys and the other children. Other children are less enthusiastic, clinging tightly to their mother's hand and begging her not to leave. Once inside, one child may watch quietly from the edge of a room while another dashes from dress-up corner to puzzles to blocks. Different children react differently to the same situation because of their individual temperaments.

Just as every child has individual physical features -- voice, smile, hair, each has a different temperament, or style of behavior.

Although many parents think that temperament can be molded, or even "fixed" with discipline, structure, or medication, research has shown that temperament is largely inborn. What parents can do is to help their children make the most of their style of behavior or temperament.

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Traits of Temperament

Beginning with the ground-breaking work of Drs. Stella Chess and Alexander Thomas, researchers have identified nine categories of temperament. Not all children show all these traits to the same degree. Some children are "very," some are "a little," and some are "none at all." Further, some traits are easier to see in certain settings than in others. Active children are easy to spot in a restaurant or classroom, but usually blend in better on a playground.

Here are the major traits. *How much do they describe your youngster and possibly yourself?*

Activity

Youngsters high in activity are always in motion during sleep, play, eating, bathing and other daily activities. Does your daughter bounce around from one foot to the other while she waits for you? Does your son crawl all over the house, wiggle in the crib or on the changing table?

Children who are very active bounce, jump, run and tumble while less active children may prefer to sit and watch television, play quietly with cars, building blocks, and dolls.

Regularity

In young children regularity is most easily seen in the rhythm of their eating, sleeping, and elimination. Children high in regularity get hungry at the same time

every day, nap for the same number of hours, and go to bed at the same time. Their bowel movements occur regularly. Even when these youngsters are fussy, they fuss at about the same time of day.

Children low in regularity have no set time for anything. They get hungry at different hours, eat different amounts of food. They may want a long nap one day and refuse to nap the next.

Initial Reaction

Some children are eager for new experiences, or at least accept them readily. Others are more hesitant and don't enjoy meeting new people or going into new situations.

Adaptability

Adaptability is a child's ease or difficulty in adjusting to a new situation -- regardless of the first reaction. Some children are generally flexible. They adjust fairly quickly to changes in babysitter, teacher, and routine. Youngsters who are more rigid keep fussing, postponing, arguing and fighting the changes. They want to know why they can't go to the beach, even though it's raining, or a friend's house when plans have been changed.

Intensity

How much energy does your child put into his responses? Regardless of whether the emotion is positive or negative, intense children react strongly. Other youngsters are very low-key. They don't give big laughs, but small giggles and smiles. When they get angry, they don't yell and scream, they fuss.

Mood

All children have emotional moments. They are happy, sad, angry, enthusiastic. But if you look at your children's mood ranging from generally positive to generally negative, where would you place her? Consider how your child wakes up in the morning: whether she smiles a lot or very infrequently; whether she's always fussing about something or generally sunny.

Persistence and Attention Span

Children who are low in these traits focus on an activity only briefly, then they are off to something else. Youngsters who are high in persistence and attention span stick to an activity. When they are distracted and their concentration is broken, they go back to what they were doing right away.

Distractibility

Although this might seem like the opposite of persistence and attention span, it is a different trait. Distractible babies are easily soothed when hungry or tired. Shake a rattle, coo at them and they forget to be fussy. As they get older, distractible children forget they are supposed to be eating breakfast if someone walks into the room. These youngsters may go into their room to get a jacket and end up walking out with the cat, or whatever else caught their attention. A baby who is not distractible can't be easily soothed but as he gets older, he'll tend to remember he was supposed to put his pajamas in the laundry, even when he has to walk past cartoons on television to get there.

Sensitivity

Sensitivity refers to the children's awareness of their environment. Sensitive youngsters notice aromas and fragrances, and changes in lighting. They complain about tight waistbands on pants, scratchy socks. Other children seem oblivious to chilly temperatures, loud noise, tight clothing. Parents are usually trying to give these youngsters sweaters when it's cold outside, and urging them to take off those wet socks when they come inside after playing in the rain.

Clusters of Traits

Sometimes temperament traits cluster together. A child that we label shy may be initially hesitant about new situations, and slow to adapt to them. She may also be a less intense child with a lower level of physical activity.

Another cluster that adults often recognize is that of an easy temperament. Youngsters with this constellation of characteristics are flexible and predictable, with a generally positive mood, and not too intense.

Other clusters of traits may make it more difficult for parents. Children who are challenging to parent are generally negative in reaction -- and intense about it, too -- and adapt very slowly to changes and new situations.

Goodness of Fit

Although many

factors in a child's environment can affect behavior, too often we neglect the important role played by temperament. Spirited or "difficult" behavior has often been attributed entirely to the child's environment, to something the parents did or did not do.

A better way to understand a child's difficult behavior is to view her temperament as being at odds with her environment. The importance of "goodness of fit" was the principle finding of the New York Longitudinal Study begun in 1956 by Chess and Thomas. Such an approach leads us to accept her temperament while improving the fit between temperament and environment.

While it might seem that some traits give children an edge, the fit matters more than the temperament traits themselves. For example, a child with a high level of activity and persistence who comes from a family that enjoys quiet times together may be seen as overly rambunctious. While in another family these youngsters may excel at athletics making for proud parents.

Children who are quiet may get lost in a family of intense reactors. The parents might wonder why Jennie never seems to enjoy herself, and Jennie's quiet fussing when hungry goes unnoticed. However, intense reacting children might upset a quiet family in which parents can be overwhelmed by their child who laughs loudly and cries heartily.

Although any mismatch could cause problems, researchers did find that children most likely to show behavioral disorders tended to be slow to adapt, withdraw initially from new experiences, show a generally negative mood, and react with high intensity. These are the children who are generally grumpy and prone to fits of intense negativity, especially when plans have to be changed or they have to go into a new situation.

These children present a challenge for most parents. And when parents do not reduce the stress by working with their temperament, these children are at risk for problems then or later.

Managing Traits for Effective Parenting

Regardless of how frustrating your youngster may seem, these traits aren't your child's attempts to control you, or make you unhappy. They are simply a reflection of his temperament. The goal of effective parenting is to work with this temperament rather than against it. As your child gets older you can begin to enlist your youngster's cooperation in modifying some of his reactions and provide him with more choices and control.

Managing Activity Level

This is perhaps one of the most potentially troublesome traits. If your child is highly active, plan ahead. Give her the opportunity to run around before going someplace where she has to be fairly quiet. It's also useful to have a supply of projects, tasks and games on hand.

Wherever possible, childproof your home, providing a safe environment for an active child. This way you won't be following your youngster around all the time shouting "no!"

These youngsters cannot switch off their high energy behavior immediately to sit down to read a book, or fall asleep. If you want to calm them down for a meal, or at bedtime, guide them to quieter activity first, helping them gradually make the transition.

Try to use more positive terms to describe your youngster -- energetic and active rather than wild or bad. You can remind your youngster to save the running for later in the play ground. Or that the child may be a fast runner but people in the supermarket don't enjoy kids racing around. This allows your child to think well of herself (she's a fast runner) but also to learn that there are places she can not run.

Children who are low in activity simply move slowly. They aren't trying to test you with their slow tempo. Give these children time to complete tasks. Compliment them on finishing a task without mentioning how long it took them to do it.

Don't call these children lazy or poky. You can acknowledge that he likes to take his time when putting blocks back carefully on the shelf, but that you still have to leave for daycare in 10 minutes. Some parents find a kitchen timer a good way for these children to understand the time limits that you have set for them.

Coping with Your Child's Initial Reaction

Although outgoing children who are comfortable with new situations generally have an edge, even children who are more inhibited can be helped.

First of all, don't think that children who are timid about new experiences will never enjoy them. Instead, prepare them for the new situation. Explain the plans and details ahead of time. You can even practice or role-play new situations -- how to walk in the door and say "hello," or what to do if the child has to go to the bathroom.

Don't badger a

child into a new situation. That can backfire. Instead, encourage gently. Make an introductory visit to a new day-care center or camp. Remind your children that it is okay if they want to take some time to get used to a situation.

Dealing with Adaptability

Children who argue and avoid a change can overwhelm a parent, but these youngsters usually just need a bit of extra time and support. The goal is to be firm, consistent and calm. Combine this with being affectionate and you send the clear message that you care about your children.

If you can, try to reduce or spread out the number of changes facing your child. Break the adjustment down into stages or parts giving her a chance to take things one step at a time rather than be overwhelmed.

When the adjustment has been made, don't forget to praise your child. This encourages future flexibility. Acknowledge that "this has been difficult for you, but you really did well when... ."

Addressing Intensity

It's easy to misread children's high intensity as truly strong feelings, but these children simply operate at a turned-up volume. A common mistake parents make is responding to a child's intensity with an equally intense reply, such as screaming back at a child who has just yelled. Sometimes, parents give in to a child's loud demand simply because it was a loud demand.

A better response is to be calm and composed. Rather than criticizing the child's volume or demanding tone, talk calmly about the real issue and not the way in which the child expressed it. "I know you have a good strong voice, but I will come to you just as soon if you ask me for a help in a softer, quieter voice."

Working with Mood

Children who fuss, complain and generally have a negative mood can easily frustrate a parent. Ignore as much of the child's negativity as you think reasonable, keeping in mind that sometimes the cause of the complaining can be quite real to the child, even though it may seem unimportant to you.

Parents can help older children reduce their negative tendencies. Remind your youngster to treat other children with good manners, smiling and saying "hello" rather than scowling. But don't scold them for this trait. Express understanding and acceptance, while at the same time offer constructive suggestions: "I know that you tend to stay annoyed for a while, but it's time to move on."

Managing Persistence and Attention Span

Although high persistence can be a real advantage for a student or in an adult, it can easily upset parents and caregivers of toddlers and young children. You may think "stubborn" but you can also think "persistent, goal-directed." There are also things you can do to work with your child's temperament. Give advance warnings: "In 10 minutes we'll have to leave so put your toys away." Acknowledge that it is difficult for your youngster to leave something he enjoys, and thank him when he does stop what he's doing to eat dinner.

For kids who are low in persistence, praise completion and follow-through. Divide complex tasks into shorter actions. Cleaning up a room is an example. Rather than putting everything away, first pick up the clothes. Acknowledge this achievement before moving on to picking up the toys.

Coping with Distractibility

Distractibility is another of those traits that change in desirability with the age of the child. Distractible babies are easily soothed but as older children they are easily diverted from chores. Remember that your distractible preschooler is not doing this on purpose. She can't help it. Instead, ask your youngster to help work out strategies to get her back on track when her attention has wandered from a task. Acknowledge that this is difficult for her and develop a reminder system. Reduce distractions when she needs to concentrate.

Handling Your Child's Sensitivity

A highly sensitive youngster may be misunderstood as finicky. Parents need to monitor the environment (especially if they aren't sensitive) and reduce the lighting and noise to help a youngster fall asleep. There isn't very much a parent can do except to be aware and patient.

Children who are low in sensitivity need to be monitored. For example, they can easily ignore mild medical maladies such as a sore throat or an ear ache.

A child's temperament is part of the package that makes up a youngster. It is the continuing core of a child's personality that shapes experiences throughout life. If we understand and respect children's individual temperaments, we give them a lifelong gift of acceptance.

William B. Carey, MD is a pediatrician in Philadelphia. For the last 11 years he has been Director of Behavioral Pediatrics in the Division of General Pediatrics at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. He is best known for his research on the assessment and clinical implications of children's temperamental differences. He is co-editor or co-author of four books on the subject, the latest of which is one for parents: "Understanding Your Child's Temperament" (New York, Macmillan, 1997).

Temperament and ADHD

What is the difference between normal inattentiveness and high activity and abnormal degrees of these traits that could be referred to as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?

The aim of the psychiatrists who created ADHD as a separate and specific diagnosis in 1980 was to describe children so pervasively inattentive or overactive that they would be extremely difficult for any caregiver to manage. This diagnosis fits about 3 - 5% of the child population according to the American Psychiatric Association, although in the United Kingdom the percentage is even lower.

Over the years, however, the diagnosis has become loosely applied by professionals and caregivers alike. Prevalence estimates range up to almost 17% although the median is 2% among school-age children. Most of these additional children, beyond the generally accepted percentage, are probably experiencing behavioral adjustment difficulties, or learning problems rather than true ADHD.

Caregivers and professionals need to be aware that just as normal children differ in the intensity of their emotional reaction, or their sensitivity to environmental stimuli, they also differ in activity level and attentiveness. Most inattentive children are so because of their temperaments rather than ADHD. Inflexibility, and problems with transitions are also usually temperament traits and not a sign of ADHD.

What is needed is a more rigorous application of a clearer diagnostic system, and a greater awareness and acceptance of the range of normal behavior by both professionals and parents.

William B. Carey, MD

The Study That Started It All

In 1956 Alexander Thomas, MD, Stella Chess, MD and Herbert G. Birch, MD, PhD began a study that would change the way parents and professionals understood children and their emotional development. They would study 136 children beginning in early infancy and follow them over the years to see which youngsters would develop behavior problems. Their main focus was on temperament, the child's behavioral style. Thomas, Chess and Birch believed the children's temperament could explain differences why children respond differently to similar patterns of parental attitudes, values and child-care practices. In short, they believed that both parent and child brought something to the dance we called child-rearing.

Although researchers would eventually study temperament among many groups of children, this first study was done among middle- and upper middle-class parents in New York City. It was on the basis of this research that the authors determined the nine categories of temperamental characteristics still in use today.

Ultimately Thomas, Chess and Birch isolated a clinical sample of children with behavioral disturbances. Most of these were mild or moderate problems -- refusing or chronically resistant to going to school, learning difficulties, constant fighting with brothers and sisters, anxiety about school performance, separation anxiety, overreaction to events

» » *Continued on Page 6.*

Dear Reader

Raising a child is more art than science. We might be tempted to think of it as we would baking a cake. Do this, add that, don't forget the other thing and then, at the end, a delicious chocolate cake -- or a perfect child.

Alas, it doesn't work that way. Why? All children are not the same. When I was in graduate school we learned the "across the board" principles of behavior. Stimulus, response, reinforcement. Modeling. No one talked about differences between babies. That would have muddied the waters. Then, my son was born and it became instantly clear to me that my professors had missed something important. Children are born with little personalities of their own.

This month's issue focuses on children's temperament. Dr. William Carey provides us with a complete overview of these traits, and how parents can work with, and not against, their children's temperament. We also have a box on the research by Drs. Thomas, Chess and Birch that started it all, and information on designing effective strategies to use with your youngster. Of course, we also have our book reviews, and Spring crafts by Dawn Barhyte.

March 20 is the first day of Spring, so ... Happy Spring!

Neala Schwartzberg

» » *Continued from Page 5.*

and people. They found that some temperamental traits were more associated with later behavioral problems than others. What are some of the traits that seemed to make a difference? An excessive frequency of high and low activity, irregularity in biological functioning, slow adaptability, intensity of emotional reaction, persistence, and distractibility.

But, neither the traits themselves or the clusters were the direct cause of the clinical problem. In fact, the authors found that children who were a joy to raise could also develop problems. It was more that some characteristics were a risk factor. These children placed special demands on parents and when parents reacted ineffectively problems could escalate. The concept of "goodness of fit" between parent and child became crucial. Parenting needed to be appropriate for a child's temperament, enabling the child to grow and develop competence. This is an idea that is still important today.

Source: "Temperament and Behavior Disorders in Children" by Alexander Thomas, Stella Chess, and Herbert G. Birch; New York University Press, New York, 1968 (second printing, 1969).

Designing Management Strategies for Your Child's Temperament

Management strategies are ways to teach skills your child needs to behave more appropriately. But these aren't general rules. Rather they are tailored to your child's particular temperament traits.

The goal is to teach your child a skill that is hard to learn because it is in opposition to her temperament. But the new skill is important. It will complement her temperament and allow her to behave appropriately in a wider variety of situations.

The attitude you take is one of acceptance, understanding, and sympathy. Your expectation is that learning takes time. Remember, we are asking the child to do something that does not come easily. Mastery will take many tries.

You can design as many management strategies as you need for your unique child. There are five ingredients that go into every management strategy:

- The problem the strategy addresses and a name to call it.
- The temperament trait the strategy is based on.
- The descriptive statement that accompanies the strategy.
- The needed skill the strategy teaches.
- The plan of action that provides an activity for practicing the needed skill.

➔ Here's one example:

Inside Voice, Outside Voice

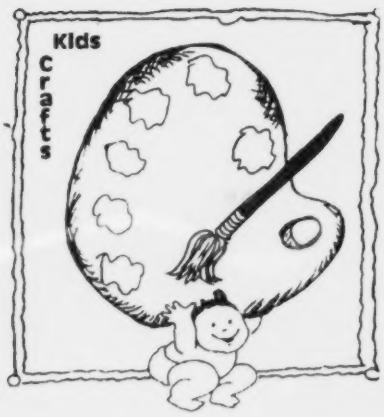
Problem: Loud voice or rowdy behavior
Temperament trait: High intensity
Description of behavior: "I understand it is natural for you to like to make noise"
Needed skill: Control over volume
What to do: This strategy helps your dynamic, intense child to learn to regulate her voice. You tell her you are going to play a new game. Then you take her on an adventure to practice inside and outside voices. Make a list of places to visit. Just before you get to each place, talk about which voice is to be used.

The inside voice is quiet and respectful of other people. Model the volume for her. The outside voice is as loud as you want it to be, as long as you do not disturb people. Model this, too.

Your child needs to practice using each voice. Have fun together. Keep playing the game for several days. Continue to talk about appropriateness as you go to different places. Good places to include on your list might be libraries, parks, the river, a hospital, the mall, Grandma's house, school, place of worship, a fair, the zoo, or a country road.

When your child has mastered a wide variety of voice levels and the game is over, you can cue her by using what you taught. Say, "Too loud. Time to switch to your inside voice." This feedback will help your child learn to monitor herself.

Adapted with permission from "Understanding Temperament: Strategies for creating family harmony" by Lyndall Shick, Published by Parenting Press, Inc. PO Box 75267, Seattle, WA 98125; 800-992-6657; www.parentingpress.com



KIDS CRAFTS

Spring Crafts

Celebrate the beauty of spring by entering the magical world of making things and let creativity blossom. These hands-on activities will help your children develop skills that they will need to be successful in life, such as an appreciation for form and color and the ability to see possibilities, manipulate shapes in their imagination, and carry through on activities.

As they work, convey the joy of crafts through support and encouragement to be inventive. You never know what will evolve when you offer your child the materials to create.

Remember, the process is paramount not the finished product. A healthy attitude toward creating that begins now will often last a lifetime.

Peanut Butter Bird Feeder

You will need: Pinecones; Peanut Butter; Bird Seed; String.

This is a good way to learn about your local wildlife. Put these feeders anywhere your child can view the visitors. Look at books with pictures of common birds. Then, sit by the feeder and see who visits. Children can also keep a small sketch pad by the window and draw the varieties of birds they observe visiting their very own bird feeder.

First have your child spread a thick layer of peanut butter over the pinecone. Then pour several cups of birdseed in a bowl. Have your child roll the pinecone in the seed until it is coated. It's now ready to hang to welcome our feathered friends.

Cool Wind Socks

You will need: Paper lunch bag; Colorful crepe paper; Scissors; Glitter; Magic Markers; Glue; Stickers.

Catch some March breezes with a homemade windsock.

First have your child cut the bottom of the paper bag. Then decorate with drawings, glitter, and stickers. Talk about the wind and how it will fill the windsock. Then have your child attach the crepe paper streamers with glue. Make a paper handle for the opposite end of the windsock and it's ready to hang.

Rainy Day Art

You will need: Uncoated white paper plates; Various food coloring; White crayon.

Make the most of a day indoors by having some fun with rainy weather. First have your child draw a design on the paper plate with the white crayon. Then using the food coloring sprinkle a few drops on the paper plate. Let your child use as many colors as she wishes to create an interesting design. Then place outdoors on a rainy day and watch as the ordinary paper plate comes alive with color. The white crayon will create a batik effect. Bring indoors. When the plate(s) are dry they are ready to display.

Patch Of Green

You will need: Grass seed; Small terracotta pot; Potting soil; Tempera paint; Paintbrushes; Ribbon.

Have your child grow their very own garden by planting some grass seed indoors. Begin by decorating the terracotta pot with the tempera paints. Remind your child to be gentle as they are breakable. Fill with potting soil and plant a generous amount of grass seed. In a few days your child will have a bit of spring indoors. For an added touch tie a pretty ribbon around the pot and display during the Spring season.

Beautiful Butterflies

You will need: Watercolors or food coloring; Markers; Glue; Glitter; Clothespins; Chenille pipe cleaners; Round coffee filters.

Begin by letting your child color the filters using either food coloring or watercolors. He will take delight in the way the colors blend into each other creating unusual patterns. Once dry he may add details with the markers and, for a wonderful iridescent quality, embellish with glitter. When the filters are completely dry, have your child pinch the filter in the middle like a bow tie. Slide or clip the clothespin onto it and then gently pull the filter out on each side forming a fan until it resembles butterfly's wings. Cut two small pieces of pipe cleaner and glue onto the clothespin body to form a pair of antenna. Twist tightly around the clothespin until secure. Discuss how caterpillars grow up to be beautiful butterflies.

Dawn Marie Barbyte

National Poison Prevention Week March 18-24, 2001

Q. *If my child eats or drinks a substance that might be poison, where can I find information on treatment?*

A. Call your Poison Control Center immediately. There are about 100 Poison Control Centers in the U.S. that maintain information on recommended treatment.

Q. *What should I know when I call the Poison Control Center?*

A. Be prepared to give the facts; have the label ready.

➔ To get a free packet of poison prevention publications write to: Poison Prevention Packet; CPSC; Washington, DC 20207

Library Resources

What If Books

One of the joys of children's books is the exploration of the world of *what if*; a world in which all things are possible. What would it be like? Read along with your child and find out.

📖 ***Harvey Potter's Balloon Farm*** by Jerdine Nolen; illustrated by Mark Buehner; Mulberry Books; New York, 1994; Softcover $4.95. Where do balloons come from? From Harvey Potter's balloon farm. Just ask the young girl who watched him. A wild, impossible book with wonderful drawings of fields of balloons.

📖 ***The Character in the Book*** by Kaethe Zemach; HarperCollins; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $14.95. Character's can't jump out of books and go off on a visit, can they? Perhaps they can. This Character lived in a Book and had friends, adventures and hobbies. One day his Aunt, who lived in another book, invited him over. Follow the Character as he goes through all the pages. When he reaches the end he jumps right to across to stay with his Aunt.

📖 ***Huggly's Pizza*** by Tedd Arnold; Scholastic; New York, 2000; Softcover $3.25. Another fun adventure of Huggly and his monster friends. Monsters don't usually eat pizza, but Huggly has tried it, and loved it. Now he and his friends are going to try to find some pizza. But it's not easy for monsters. Follow their humorous adventures as they pursue, lose, and regain pizza.

📖 ***Lima Beans Would be Illegal*** by Robert Bender; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 2000; Hardcover $12.00. Although this isn't a book for preschoolers, it is a book that stimulates the imagination, and provides quite a few thought-provoking answers to the question "What do you think would make our world a more perfect place to be?" When asked of children 6 to 12 years of age, the answers ranged from humorous (although inadvertently so) "It would be a perfect world if my dog didn't lick out of the toilet and then lick my face" to the thoughtful "... there would be a cure for Alzheimer's. When my grandpa died, he didn't know that I was his granddaughter."

📖 ***Minnie and Moo Go Dancing*** by Denys Cazet; DK Ink; New York, 1998; Softcover $3.95. Those lovable cows can't figure out why they weren't invited to the farmer's party. When they find a cache of clothes and make-up they decide to join the fun. But when the cows eat a hamburger they're afraid they've eaten one of their friends. A funny and sweet book perfect for beginning readers (or to read with a parent).

📖 ***The Pig is in the Pantry, the Cat is on the Shelf*** by Shirley Mozelle; illustrated by Jennifer Plecas; Clarion Books; New York, 2000; Hardcover $15.00. When Mr. McDuffel left for town he forgot to lock the door of his house. The animals all thought it would be great to go inside. So, while the farmer is gone, and the clock ticks away, the animals frolic.

📖 ***What if?*** by Jonathan Shipton; pictures by Barbara Nascimbeni; Dial Books for Young Readers; New York, 1999; Hardcover $15.99. What if it stopped raining and you went outside and found a sunflower as big as a skyscraper? Follow the adventures of the young boy and girl, and don't forget to ask your youngsters what they think would happen.

📖 ***We Were Tired of Living in a House*** by Liesel Moak Skorpen; illustrated by Joe Cepeda; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York, 1999; Hardcover $15.99. If you didn't live in a house, where would you live? Three young children set out to find a different kind of home. They liked living in a tree, until they tumbled out. The raft was fun, until it sank. At the end, they packed their bag with all the treasures they had collected (scarlet leaves, seashells with the song of the surf) and went back to live in a house.

📖 ***Zak's Lunch*** by Margie Palatini; illustrated by Howard Fine; Clarion Books; New York, 1998; Hardcover $15.00. Zak isn't happy about the ham and cheese sandwich his mother made for lunch. In an instant he found himself in Zak's Place and the waitress was taking his order. Soon he was eating a super-duper triple-deluxe burger, fries, pizza, chicken and more. Then, he moved on to dessert. Eventually reality returns, along with his mother and the ham and cheese sandwich, which the dog eats.

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PP Parent and preschooler

NEWSLETTER

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Temperamento

Tómese unos pocos minutos y observe a los niños en el patio, en el jardín infantil, o incluso en su propia cocina y Ud. notará que cada niño reacciona de forma distinta a las personas, objetos y eventos. Cuando van a la pre-escuela por primera vez, algunos niños no se pueden aguantar a entrar y jugar con los juguetes y con los otros niños. Otros niños son menos entusiastas, aferrándose a la mano de su mamá y pidiéndole que no se vaya. Una vez que entran, un niño puede que mire desde un rincón de la sala mientras que otro revolotea del rincón de los disfraces, a los rompecabezas o los bloques. Distintos niños reaccionan diferentemente a la misma situación debido a sus temperamentos individuales.

Así como cada niño tiene rasgos físicos individuales - voz, sonrisa, pelo- cada uno tiene un temperamento distinto, o un estilo de conducta. Aunque muchos padres creen que el temperamento puede ser moldeado, o incluso "arreglado" con disciplina, estructura o medicamentos, las investigaciones han demostrado que el temperamento es congénito. Lo que los padres pueden hacer es ayudar a sus hijos a aprovechar al máximo su estilo de conducta o temperamento.

Los Características del Temperamento

Comenzando con el trabajo inédito de los Doctores Stella Chess y Alexander Thomas, los investigadores han identificado nueve categorías de temperamento. No todos los niños muestran todas estas características en el mismo grado. Algunos niños son "muy", algunos son "un poco", y otros son "nada". Además, algunas características son más fáciles de detectar en ciertos contextos que en otros. Los niños activos son fáciles de detectar en un restaurante o sala de clases, pero generalmente se integran mejor en el patio de recreo.

He aquí las características principales. *Cuan bien describen a su hijo y posiblemente a Ud.?*

Actividad

Los niños muy activos siempre están moviéndose durante el sueño, cuando juegan, mientras comen, se bañan y otras actividades cotidianas. Su hija salta de un pie a otro mientas lo espera? Su hijo se arrastra por toda la casa, o se mece en la cuna o en la mesa de cambiar pañales?

Los niños muy activos saltan, corren y ruedan, mientras que los menos activos pueden preferir sentarse y mirar televisión, jugar en silencio con sus carritos, bloques y muñecas.

Regularidad

En los niños chicos la regularidad se ve más fácilmente en el ritmo de su alimentación, sueño y evacuación. Los niños que son muy regulares tienen hambre a la misma hora todos los días, duermen siesta el mismo número de horas y se acuestan a la misma hora. Hacen sus necesidades con regularidad. Incluso cuando están malhumorados, se ponen de malhumor a la misma hora del día.

Los niños de baja regularidad no tienen hora fija para nada. Tienen hambre a distintas horas del día y comen distintas cantidades de comida. Quizás quieran una siesta larga un día y se nieguen a dormir al día siguiente.

Reacción Inicial

Algunos niños están ansiosos por tener nuevas experiencias, o por lo menos las aceptan rápidamente. Otros son más reticentes y no les gusta conocer a nuevas personas o entrar en situaciones nuevas.

Adaptabilidad

La adaptabilidad es la facilidad o la dificultad de un niño de ajustarse a una nueva situación -a pesar de su reacción inicial. Algunos niños son generalmente flexibles. Se adaptan bastante rápidamente a cambios de niñera, profesores y rutinas. Los niños que son más rígidos siguen fastidiando, postergando, reclamando y luchando contra los cambios. Quieren saber por qué no pueden ir a la playa, a pesar de que está lloviendo, o a la casa de un amigo cuando se ha cambiado de planes.

Intensidad

Cuanta energía pone su niño en sus reacciones? Pese a si la reacción es positiva o negativa, los niños intensos reaccionan fuertemente. Otros niños son muy mesurados. No se ríen fuertemente, sino con risitas.

PP 000394

Cuando se enojan, no gritan ni chillan, sino que se quejan.

Estado de Animo

Todos los niños tienen momentos emocionales. Están felices, tristes, enojados, entusiasmados. Pero si Ud. estudia los estados de animo de sus niña, desde generalmente positivos a generalmente negativos, cómo la clasificaría? Considere cómo su hija se levanta en la mañana: si sonríe mucho o poco; si ella siempre se está quejando de algo o está generalmente de buen humor.

Persistencia y Atención

Los niños que son bajos en estas características solo se concentran brevemente en una actividad y rápidamente pasan a hacer otra cosa. Los niños que tienen mucha persistencia y alta atención se concentran en la actividad. Cuando se distraen y se rompe su concentración, vuelven inmediatamente a hacer lo que estaban haciendo.

Distracción

Aunque esto puede parecer lo contrario a persistencia y atención, es un rasgo distinto. Los bebés que se distraen fácilmente son fáciles de calmar cuando tienen hambre o están cansados. Solo basta pasarles un juguete o susurrarles cariñosamente y se olvidan de sus molestias. A medida que crecen, los niños fáciles de distraer se olvidan que deben estar tomando desayuno si alguien entra a la habitación. Estos niños pueden ir a su habitación a buscar una chaqueta y salen con el gato, o cualquier otra cosa que les llamó la atención. Un bebé que no se distrae no es fácil de calmar, pero a medida que crece se acordará que tenía que poner sus pijamas en la maquina de lavar, incluso cuando está la televisión encendida con los monitos animados en el camino.

Sensibilidad

La sensibilidad se refiere a la conciencia de los niños a su entorno. Los niños sensitivos notan los aromas y fragancias y los cambios de luz. Se quejan sobre los pantalones apretados o los calcetines ásperos. Otros niños parecen no notar las bajas temperaturas, fuertes ruidos, o ropa apretada. Los padres generalmente están tratando de darles a estos niños chombas cuando hace frío afuera, o instándolos a que se saquen los calcetines mojados después de haber estado jugando en la lluvia.

Grupos de Características

A veces las características de temperamento se juntan. Un niño que definimos como timido puede ser inicialmente reticente a nuevas situaciones y ser lento a adaptarse. Ella también puede ser una niña con menos intensidad y un nivel de actividad física más bajo.

Otro grupo que los adultos generalmente reconocen son los de fácil temperamento. Los niños con esta acumulación de características son flexibles y predecibles, con un estado de animo positivo, y no demasiado intenso.

Otros grupos de características pueden ser mas difíciles para los padres. Los niños que son un desafío para los padres son, generalmente, de reacciones negativas (y, además, intensos) y se adaptan muy lentamente a los cambios y a situaciones nuevas.

Buena Concordancia

A pesar de que muchos factores en el entorno del niño pueden afectar la conducta, frecuentemente olvidamos el importante papel que tiene el temperamento. La conducta vigorosa o difícil frecuentemente ha sido atribuida completamente al entorno del niño, o a algo que los padres hicieron o no hicieron.

Una mejor manera de comprender la conducta difícil de un niño es ver su temperamento en conflicto con su entorno. La importancia de "la buena concordancia" fue el principal resultado del Estudio Longitudinal de Nueva York, iniciado en 1956 por Chess y Thomas. Dicho enfoque nos ayuda a aceptar su temperamento a medida que mejoramos la adaptación entre el temperamento y el ambiente.

A pesar de que parece que algunas características les dan una ventaja a los niños, la adaptación es más importante que las mismas características del temperamento. Por ejemplo, un niño con alto nivel de actividad y persistencia que proviene de una familia que le gusta pasar juntos momentos tranquilos, pareciera que fuera demasiado animoso. Mientras que en otra familia, estos niños pueden sobresalir en los deportes, haciendo feliz a sus padres.

Los niños que son tranquilos pueden perderse en una familia que reacciona intensamente. Los padres pueden preguntarse por qué Juanita nunca parece pasarlo bien y el silencioso refunfuñar de Juanita cuando tiene hambre quizás pase desapercibido. Sin embargo, los niños que reaccionan intensamente perturban a una familia tranquila en que los padres pueden sentirse derrotados por su niño que ríe estruendosamente y llora estrepitosamente.

Aunque una descompensación puede causar problemas, los investigadores descubrieron que los niños que más probablemente demostrarían desordenes conductuales tienden a ser lentos para adaptarse, se alejan inicialmente de las nuevas experiencias, demuestran un estado de animo generalmente negativo, y reaccionan con alta intensidad. Estos son los niños que están generalmente malhumorados y son susceptibles a intensa negatividad, especialmente cuando hay que cambiar de planes o tienen que entrar en una nueva situación.

Estos niños son un desafío para la mayoría de los padres. Y cuando los padres no disminuyen el estrés trabajando con su temperamento, estos niños estaban a riesgo de tener problemas en ese momento o más tarde.

Manejo de las Características para ser un Padre Eficaz

No obstante cuan frustrante puede parecer su hijo, estas características no son el intento de su hijo para controlarlo, o hacerlo infeliz. Son, sencillamente, un reflejo de su temperamento. El trabajo de ser padres efectivos es

trabajar con el temperamento en vez de ir contra de el. A medida que el niño crece uno puede empezar a obtener la cooperación del niño para modificar algunas de sus reacciones y para darle más opciones y control.

Manejar el Nivel de Actividad

Esta es quizás una de las características potencialmente más problemáticas. Si su niño es muy activo, planifique con anticipación. Déle la oportunidad de correr por todas partes antes de ir alguna parte donde tiene que estar relativamente tranquila. También es útil tener varios proyectos, tareas, y juegos a la mano.

Donde sea posible, trate de hacer su hogar a prueba de niños, dándole un ambiente seguro a un niño activo. De esta manera Ud. no tiene que andar siguiendo a su hijo todo el tiempo diciendo "no".

Estos niños no pueden apagar su conducta de alta energía inmediatamente y sentarse a leer un libro, o quedarse dormidos. Si Ud. quiere calmarlos para que puedan comer, o a la hora de acostarse, primero guíelos a una actividad más tranquila, ayudándolos a que hagan la transición paulatinamente.

Intente usar términos más positivos para describir a su niño, vivaz y activo en vez de malo y rudo. Ud. puede recordarle a su niño a dejar las carreras para más tarde en el parque. O que ella corre muy rápidamente pero a las personas del supermercado no les gusta que los niños anden corriendo atolondradamente. Esto le permite a su hija a sentirse bien sobre sí misma (puede correr muy rápido) sino que también aprender que hay lugares donde no puede correr.

Los niños de poca actividad, sencillamente se mueven más lentamente. No están tratando de ponerlo a prueba con su ritmo lento. Déle a estos niños tiempo para completar tareas. Felicítelos cuando terminan una tarea sin mencionar cuanto tiempo se demoraron en hacerla.

No llame a estos niños flojos o lerdos. Uno puede reconocer que le gusta tomarse su tiempo cuando cuidadosamente pone sus bloques en el estante, pero que solo quedan 10 minutos para irse a la pre-escuela. Algunos padres encuentran que usar un temporizador de cocina es una buena manera para que estos niños comprendan los limites de tiempo que uno les ha fijado.

Enfrentando las Reacciones Iniciales de su Niño

A pesar de que los niños afables que están cómodos en situaciones nuevas generalmente tienen una ventaja, incluso los niños que son más inhibidos pueden ser ayudados.

Primero, no crea que los niños que son tímidos en cuanto a nuevas situaciones, nunca las van a disfrutar. Es mejor prepararlos para las nuevas situaciones. Explíqueles los planes y los detalles de antemano. Ud. puede incluso practicar o jugar o modelar nuevas situaciones. Cómo entrar por la puerta y decir "hola", o que hacer si el niño tiene que ir al baño.

No hostigue al niño a que pruebe una nueva situación. Esto puede tener el efecto contrario, sino aliéntelo suavemente. Haga una visita de introducción a la nueva pre-escuela o campamento. Recuérdele a su hija que está bien si necesitan tiempo para adaptarse a la situación.

Enfrentando la Adaptabilidad

Los niños que reclaman y evitan un cambio pueden abrumar a un padre, pero estos niños generalmente solo necesitan un poco de tiempo adicional y apoyo. Le meta es ser firme, consistente y tranquilo. Combine esto con ser afectuoso y Ud. mandará el mensaje claro que Ud. quiere a sus niños.

Si puede, trate de disminuir o repartir el número de cambios que enfrenta su niño. Divida el ajuste en etapas o partes dándole la oportunidad de hacer las cosas paso por paso en vez de que se sienta abrumada.

Cuando se halla hecho el ajuste, no se olvide de elogiar a su hija. Esto alienta flexibilidad en el futuro. Reconozca que "esto ha sido difícil para ti, pero lo hiciste muy bien cuando...."

Encarando la Intensidad

Es fácil malentender la alta intensidad de los niños, tal como los sentimientos fuertes, pero hay que darse cuenta que estos niños sencillamente funcionan a volumen alto. Un error común que cometen los padres es el de responder a la intensidad de un niño con una respuesta igualmente intensa, como, por ejemplo, gritándole al niño que acaba de gritar. A veces, los padres sencillamente acceden a una demanda estrepitosas de un niño porque era una demanda ruidosa.

Una respuesta más acertada es estar calmado y sosegado. En vez de criticar el volumen del niño o su tono demandante, hable tranquilamente sobre el verdadero problema y no la manera en que el niño lo expresó. "Yo se que tu tienes una voz muy fuerte, pero yo vendré igual de rápido si tu me pides ayuda en una voz mas baja y más suave".

Trabando con los Ánimos

Los niños que se quejan, lloriquean y que generalmente tienen un animo negativo pueden fácilmente frustrar a un padre. Ignore lo más posible la negatividad de su niño que Ud. crea razonable, teniendo en mente que a veces la causa de la queja puede ser muy real para el niño, a pesar que a Ud. le pueda parecer nimia.

Los padres pueden ayudar a los niños de más edad a disminuir sus tendencias negativas. Recuérdele a su hijo que trate a otros niños con educación, sonriendo y saludando en vez de fruncir el ceño. No los amoneste por esta característica. Exprese comprensión y aceptación, mientras que al mismo tiempo le ofrece sugerencias: "Yo se que tu tienes la tendencia a quedarte enojado por un tiempo, pero es el momento de seguir adelante."

Manejando la

Persistencia y la Atención

A pesar de que mucha persistencia puede ser una verdadera ventaja para un estudiante o para un adulto, puede fácilmente afectar a los padres y a las personas que cuidan a los bebés o a los niños chicos. Ud. puede pensar en "tozudo" pero también se puede pensar en "persistente y enfocado en el objetivo". también hay cosas que se pueden hacer para trabajar con el temperamento de su niño. Adviértalo de antemano: "En 10 minutos tenemos que irnos así que guarda tus juguetes". Reconozca que es difícil que su hijo deje de hacer algo que goza, y agradézcale cuando deja de hacer lo que está haciendo para ir a comer.

Para los niños que tienen poca persistencia, alábelo cuando completa algo. Divida las tareas complejas en acciones más cortas. Ordenar la habitación puede ser un buen ejemplo. En vez de guardar todo, primero guarden la ropa. Reconozca este logro antes de proseguir con guardar los juguetes.

Enfrentando la Desatención

La desatención es otra de esas características que cambian en cuanto a ser deseables de acuerdo a la edad del niño. Los bebés que se distraen son fáciles de calmar pero al tener más edad, son fácilmente distraídos de sus tareas. Recuerde que su niño preescolar no está haciendo esto a propósito. No se puede aguantar. Es mejor que Ud. Y su hija juntos desarrollen estrategias para ayudarla a enfocar cuando se distrae. Reconozca que esto es difícil para ella y desarrolle un sistema para recordar. Disminuya las distracciones cuando necesita concentrarse en algo.

Manejando las Sensibilidades de su Niño

Un niño altamente sensible puede ser mal interpretado como regañón. Los padres deben monitorear el ambiente (especialmente si no son sensibles) y disminuir la luz, el ruido para ayudar al niño a quedarse dormido. No es mucho lo que puede hacer un padre excepto tener conciencia y ser paciente.

Los que tienen baja sensibilidad tienen que ser vigilados. Por ejemplo, ellos fácilmente pueden ignorar pequeñas enfermedades físicas como un dolor de garganta o dolor de oídos.

El temperamento de un niño es parte del paquete que hace un niño. Es la esencia constante de personalidad de un niño que conforma experiencias a través de la vida. Si comprendemos y respetamos los temperamentos individuales de los niños, les damos el don de la tolerancia para toda la vida.

El Dr. William B. Carey, M.D., es pediatra en Filadelfia. Durante los últimos 11 años ha sido Director de Pediatría Conductual en la División de Pediatría General en Hospital del Niño de Filadelfia. Es conocido por su investigación en la evaluación y las implicancias clínicas de las diferencias en temperamentos de los niños. Co-editó y es coautor de cuatro libros sobre el tema, y su último es para padres: Understanding Your Child's Temperament (New York, Macmillan, 1997).

Temperamento y DDAH

Cual es la diferencia entre la desatención normal y la alta actividad, grados anormales de estas características que se pueden llamar Desorden de Déficit Atencional /Hiperactividad (DDAH)?

La meta de los siquiatras que crearon DDAH como un diagnóstico aparte y específico en 1980 era describir niños tan desatentos o hiperactivos que serían extremadamente difíciles de manejar para cualquier profesional de la salud. Este diagnóstico calza a aproximadamente del 3% al 5% de la población infantil de acuerdo a la Asociación Siquiátrica Americana, auque en el Reino Unido el porcentaje es aun más bajo. A través de los años, el diagnóstico ha sido aplicado livianamente por profesionales y otros. Los estimados de prevalencia llegan hasta casi el 17% aunque la media es de 2% entre los niños de edad escolar. La mayoría de estos niños adicionales, por sobre el porcentaje que generalmente se acepta, seguramente están experimentando dificultades de ajuste conductual, o problemas de aprendizaje en vez de verdadero DDAH.

Los profesionales y otros proveedores de salud tienen que tener conciencia que así como los niños son diferentes en la intensidad de sus reacciones emocionales, o su sensibilidad a los estímulos del entorno, también son distintos en su nivel de actividad y atención. La mayoría de los niños desatentos lo son debidos a su temperamento en vez de DDAH. La inflexibilidad y los problemas con transiciones son generalmente rasgos de temperamento y no un síntoma de DDAH.

Lo que se necesita es una aplicación más rigurosa de un sistema de diagnostico más claro, y más conciencia y aceptación del rango normal de conducta por parte de padres y de profesionales.

William B. Carey, MD.

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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Children's Fears:

Where They Come From, How To Soothe Them

Our family hosts an annual Labor Day party, and at this year's gathering we had one of those nightmare experiences every host dreads. Some boys were playing soccer on the grass in our backyard, and the ball they were kicking around happened to hit a previously unknown wasp nest.

Instantly hundreds of angry wasps were swarming over the children. By the time the grown-ups had rushed them to safety several of the boys had been stung, one of them more than 30 times.

Fortunately we had two doctors and a police officer among the party guests, so the children were immediately cared for. Needless to say, this was a terrifying experience for everyone involved.

For the next few days my wife and I kept in close contact with the parents of those children most affected by the wasp attack. To our surprise, the boy who was stung 30+ times was perfectly fine after a day or two.

He wasn't happy about the event, of course, but he wasn't traumatized by it either. He actually seemed surprised all the grown-ups were making such a big deal about it. Another boy, however, who hadn't even been stung was still deeply frightened more than a week later, with recurrent nightmares and periods of inconsolable crying.

Why is it that children react to the same event in such different ways? Why do children fear some things and not others? Where do children's fears come from, and what can parents do to soothe them?

Normal Fears

Fear is one of the most deeply-rooted human emotions, with a clear value for self-preservation. Fear is the emotion that induces caution, wariness, and heightened sensitivity to possible threats. In a basic evolutionary sense, fear promotes human survival by making us more aware of potential dangers to our well-being.

Fear is an especially valuable emotion for children because, compared to adults, children are extremely vulnerable to all manner of dangers. This means it is perfectly normal for children to be frightened of many different things — new places, loud noises, strange people, animals, darkness, and anything that may separate them from their parents.

A more positive way of describing this instinctive fearfulness is to say that children naturally desire safety. Children prefer familiar people and known places because they innately know these offer them a better chance for care, comfort, and protection. Fear, in this sense, is just the flip side of a desire for healthy, happy growth.

Many parents and teachers have had experience with children who don't seem quite fearful enough. When my daughter Maya was about two years old she was crawling around on a low outside deck that had no side railings. She crawled to the edge of the deck, looked down to the grassy ground eight feet below her, and evidently decided, "No problem. Nothing to be afraid of. I can do that." I caught her just as she was backing her legs over the edge. In a case like this, it would be nice for a

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child to have just a little more fear, to take just a slightly more cautious approach to situations that pose real danger.

In sum, fear in children is natural, normal, and good for them—up to a point. It's when that point is passed that fearfulness becomes a cause for concern.

Different Fears at Different Ages

Many fears are directly related to developmental issues that arise at special points in a child's life. Some children have more difficulty with these issues, while some have less. Some children get over age-related fears relatively quickly, while others take much longer.

As with every aspect of child development, there is no one-size-fits-all model that perfectly explains every child's behavior. But some general patterns do exist, and it can be helpful for parents to know what kinds of experiences are likely to frighten their children at different ages.

Children up to the age of four are commonly frightened of obvious, immediate threats to their well being, i.e. large animals, fast-moving vehicles, fire, ocean waves, and so forth.

Very young children are also famous for two types of more generalized fear: separation anxiety and stranger anxiety. Separation anxiety reflects children's well-justified belief that the farther away they are from their parents, the less safe and secure they are. Infants and toddlers often become upset and fearful when they are separated from their parents.

Stranger anxiety is a perfectly reasonable concern that someone who is not a familiar caregiver is a potential danger. Youngsters will show this anxiety when an unknown person (or even a person who is simply not familiar enough) approaches too closely for their comfort.

In the normal course of development a child learns to overcome these fears: not all separation is dangerous, nor do all strangers pose a threat.

Children in the early years of grade school (kindergarten to second grade) frequently develop new fears relating to the expanding range of their peer relations. At this age children become very concerned about forming friendships and being included in other children's games. The developmental shift is from fears over physical well being to fears over social well being. To a grown-up, a kindergarten playground might appear a happy and carefree place, but to a five-year old it's a social mine field of potential rejection, exclusion, and ostracism.

By the later grade school years (third grade and up) a new set of fears typically emerges related to schoolwork itself. Grades, tests, deadlines, and homework become sources of anxiety. In most cases the new academic demands put on children at this age are matched by the natural unfolding of their intellectual abilities.

Sometimes, though, the academic demands put on children are too heavy, or their ability to meet these demands develops slowly. In this case, a relatively normal level of concern becomes an overwhelming anxiety that leads to sleeplessness, irritability, and social withdrawal.

Exaggerated Fears

Fearfulness is a natural, normal part of growing up for all children. The basic goal for parents and teachers is to encourage fear that is healthy, realistic, and proportional. A healthy fear is one that is directed toward an actual danger and leads to appropriately cautious behavior. Most children at one time or another develop a fear that does not seem realistic or proportional. Their natural fearfulness can make children so sensitive to potential dangers that they err on the side of being too fearful. In a sense, they over-react to a situation.

It's realistic, for example, for children to be afraid of fire, and it's appropriate for them to be cautious around the kitchen stove. But it would not be realistic for children to be scared of a picture of fire, and it wouldn't be proportional for them to refuse to enter a house because of the stove in the kitchen.

Children are also very quick to generalize their fears. When I read a story book to my youngest son Conor about two wolves who are attacked by a farmer with a rifle, Conor immediately concluded that all farmers are frightening bad guys. "Watch out for farmers, dad," he would solemnly warn me.

It took quite a bit of persuading to convince Conor that most farmers are actually good guys

who don't shoot guns at anything that moves. Although he finally agreed with me, I expect Conor will remain secretly suspicious of farmers for some time to come.

This is exactly where parents and teachers play a key role in children's development: helping them sort out what is a realistic and proportional fear from what is not. Great patience is necessary to provide children with the time and guidance they need to develop a greater sense of safety and security in the world.

Symbolic Fears

Sometimes children's fears seem to have little to do with any "real" danger at all. These are the most troubling to parents and teachers because no amount of reasoning or reassurance helps overcome the fear. My experience is that such fears often symbolize a threat the child perceives that he or she can't express in any other way. In these cases the fear is very real, even if the apparent object of the fear is not an actual threat to the child.

For example, few children have ever seen or been in real danger from an actual wolf, yet countless children are terrified of them. Why? Because wolves are wonderful symbols for <u>other</u> dangers, such as aggressive impulses within themselves or their parents. A child may be frightened by a parent's anger, or their own aggressive thoughts but they do not have the language to directly express these fears. The same is true of children's fears of witches, vampires, mummies, ghosts, and so on. The object of the fear may not be "real," but the fear itself <u>is</u> real and needs to be taken seriously.

Going back to the story of the wasp attack at my family's Labor Day party, it seemed to me that the boy who remained so frightened for weeks after the incident had developed a symbolic fear. The boy's family had recently gone through some tough times and his worries about that difficult situation seemed to be expressed through his intense fear of another wasp attack.

It usually requires a fair amount of intuitive detective work to discern the underlying cause of such symbolic fears, but the effort is always worth it. Helping children make sense of their own feelings and anxieties is one of the best ways of encouraging their healthy emotional development and greater self-awareness.

What Can Parents Do?

There are several steps parents can take to help their children develop a healthy and appropriate degree of fearfulness.

The first is obvious: protect children as much as possible from experiences that will overwhelm them with fear. Often it isn't possible to do this. Children who are caught in car accidents, fires, criminal attacks, and other traumatizing incidents are unfortunately at serious risk. They may have difficulties reestablishing a sense of security in the world. Sometimes, though, the traumatic event could have been avoided. For example, don't let a child watch an excessively violent movie.

A second step parents can take is to affirm their children's strengths, focusing in particular on fears the children have successfully overcome. As an example, take a boy who was initially terrified of the water but later learns to swim. That might not seem like such a big deal to a grown-up, but for the boy it's a major achievement, a true milestone in his emotional development.

Parents can help children make achievements like this a source of personal inspiration. Periodically reminding children of fears they used to have and praising them for their success in overcoming them is an effective way of reassuring children they can grow beyond their fears.

A third step is to take children's nightmares seriously. Dreams are an excellent barometer of a child's emotional life. If there's something especially frightening in a child's life, you can be sure it will appear in his or her dreams. The best thing to do when a child has a nightmare is <u>listen</u>. Don't try to "interpret" the dream, don't try to explain it away, don't say, "it's just a dream, dear, go back to sleep."

The simple act of listening, respectfully and empathetically, to the nightmare will signal to the child that his or her emotions are being taken seriously. That won't make the fear go away, but at least the child won't feel alone in trying to deal with it.

(For more information on children's dreams, see When Your Child Dreams, April-2000)

Dreams, April, 2000)

A fourth step invites parents and teachers to look within themselves and ask, "What are my biggest fears?" Young children often pick up their fears, like they pick up so much else in life, from the adults around them. In a very real way, children's fears are mirrors of adults' fears. So, are you afraid of being late? Of making a fool of yourself in public? Of expressing anger? Of not having enough money? Of people who look or behave a certain way? Of being too fat or too thin? Whatever it is you fear, your children will most likely decide it's a good idea for them to be scared of the same thing.

Some adults think they can hide their fears from their children, but that's folly. Children are by nature exquisitely sensitive to their parents' emotional states. You can be confident that your children have a very, very good idea about what makes you afraid. If you show the courage to face your own fears and work to overcome them, this will have a big positive impact on your children. The belief that "If mom and dad can do it, so can I" enables children to develop the ability to face and confront their own fears.

In the end, that's the best thing parents can do: not hiding their children from all the world's dangers, but helping their children grow to the point where they can meet those dangers with courage and self-confidence.

Kelly Bulkeley, Ph.D., teaches psychology and religion at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California. He is the author of Transforming Dreams (John Wiley & Sons, 2000) and Visions of the Night (SUNY, 1999). He can be contacted on the web at: www.kellybulkeley.com

Dear Reader

Sometime, perhaps when no one's around, kneel down on the floor and look up. Doors and the rooms beyond suddenly look rather large and a bit menacing. Now, imagine that huge space filled with fully grown adults. They too loom large. Sometimes we forget that children are small beings in a adult-sized world, and have few skills to protect themselves. It's hard to be brave when you are little.

When I was a child my worst fears were witches, and getting out of bed in the dark. Although I never saw one, I knew there were awful monsters lurking under the bed waiting to grab my feet. I was also never too keen on going places if my parents weren't there to protect me.

This month Kelly Bulkeley, PhD, talks about children's fears and how parents can help their youngsters, bringing his warm and wise view as a psychologist and parent.

There's also information on anxiety disorders in children, and a new study showing that we are indeed becoming a more and more anxious society.

Book reviews and recipes fill out this issue. Don't forget that April 22 is Earth Day. Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour talks about being nice to the earth. Remember, we need to live here for a long time.

Neala Schwartzberg

Anxiety Disorders in Children

All children become anxious now and again. In fact, anxiety in children is normal at specific stages in their development. When your toddler sees a stranger she may cling to your leg. That's normal and expected. Then, there are fears that most children seem to have such as darkness, animals, thunderstorms. But, what's normal and understandable at one age could signal a problem at another age – a five-year-old who clings to your leg when a stranger approaches or screams in fear when passing a darkened room.

For this reason, identifying anxiety disorders in children is not always simple. Whether it is age-appropriate is one clue, So is the frequency and intensity. Reluctance to go to preschool, or a sudden desire to stay home instead of playing with a friend once in a while isn't unusual, but it can signal a problem when it begins to happen more frequently.

One of the best guidelines is whether or not a child's anxieties interfere with his normal activities. If your youngster won't go to school on a regular basis, or comes up with one excuse after another why he can't go to any of his friends' houses to play, you may want to contact a mental health professional for more information on anxiety.

Where Do Anxiety Disorders Come From?

Certainly traumatic experiences such as losing one's house in a hurricane, or being physically abused can cause anxiety, but so can events that seem less horrific but nonetheless shake up a child's life such as moving, or starting a new school. And, some children are just very anxious and seem to be predisposed to develop anxiety problems. Heredity may be a factor, and evidence is accumulating that links anxiety to an over-active biochemistry.

What Does an Anxiety Disorder Look Like?

There isn't just one kind of anxiety disorder. Here are some of the more common forms of anxiety.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

This is a general but unrealistic worry over almost any issue. Family disagreements, friends, school, future events like a party, or a day trip can provoke concern and fear. The key is not that this occurs, all children can start worrying about something now and again, but that it is chronic, and stops the child from functioning.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Children with OCD have recurring thoughts that they just can't dismiss. These obsessive, and generally unhappy, ideas consume hours of their day. The compulsive part of OCD refers to behaviors that the child does over and again. Hand washing is one of the more familiar ones, but there can also be constant checking on

things, or rituals of arranging things. The goal of these actions is usually to allay anxiety and fears.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

One of the after-effects of a traumatic event is often that a child will re-experience that event, along with intense fear, helplessness, and agitated behavior. Young children may relive that event through play, acting out the event, or it may appear in frightening dreams and nightmares.

Separation Anxiety Disorder

Excessive and chronic crying, clinging, panic when you leave your youngster can indicate a separation anxiety disorder. Worrying about a parent being seriously hurt, afraid the parent will never come home, are other potential indicators.

Specific Phobia

Terrifying fear of particular object or circumstance that doesn't pose a true danger is usually called a phobia. It could be blood, an animal, insects, bridges and tunnels. Again, it can be difficult to separate "normal" fears from a problem phobia but it is the extent of the anxiety that signals the problem.

Panic Disorder

This is rarely found in young children, but does occur in older children and adolescents. It's char-acterized by intense physiological symptoms: pounding heart, sweating and shaking, feeling of constriction in the chest, perhaps difficulty breathing. There are also fears of going crazy, or dying. Those who experience panic attacks may also be very reluctant to leave the house. In fact, it is this inability to go to school, family trips, or visit friends, that usually signals that there is a problem.

How are They Treated?

There are effective treatments for young children without the use of medication. The major approach is called cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) which teaches children coping techniques and then gradually helps them face the feared situation. In essence, they are taught how to be unafraid. Parents also become part of the treatment, learning about the disorder, and how to help the child overcome the problem.

For More Information on Children and Anxiety:

* American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; Facts for Families; Public Information; P.O. Box 96106; Washington DC, 20090; www.aacap.org

* Anxiety Disorders Association of America; 11900 Parklawn Drive; Suite 100; Rockville, MD 20852; (301) 231-9350 www.adaa.org

* The National Institute of Mental Health; Office of Communication; 6001 Executive Blvd.; Room 8184 MSC 9663; Bethesda, MD 20892; (301) 443-4513; www.nimh.nih.gov

Are you're wondering whether children today are more anxious than children were in the past? Well, the answer is yes. According to research published in December, 2000 in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology average, normal children today report being more anxious than child psychiatric patients in the 1950s.

Psychologist and study author Jean M. Twenge, PhD of Case Western Reserve University conducted two new meta-analytic studies of elementary school children and college students, beginning in the 1950s. This involved looking at all the appropriate research and investigating whether the anxiety scores changed over time. The type of anxiety in these studies is known as trait anxiety, a relatively stable trait rather than a temporary state of anxiety due to a particular situation.

The study with children looked at anxiety scores between 1954 and 1981 in almost 100 samples of children ages 9 - 17. Both the studies with college students over that time period and the studies with children found the same result – consistently growing levels of anxiety. "The birth cohort change in anxiety is so large that by the 1980s normal child samples were scoring higher than child psychiatric patients from the 1950s," writes Twenge.

Although the reason for the steady increase isn't known, Twenge suggests that anxiety levels are associated with low social connectedness and high environmental threat (e.g. rising divorce, higher crime, fear of disease, and war). The study also notes increased media coverage as a source of a greater perception of threat.

• *The Age of Anxiety? Birth Cohort Change in Anxiety and Neuroticism*, 1952-1993, Jean M. Twenge, PhD Case Western Reserve University; *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol.79(6), 1007-1021.

What Does This Mean?

It seems that the world really has changed in the past 50 years. One of the results seems to be more anxious children and young adults. Although this study didn't look at parents, it would be surprising if they too weren't affected.

In general, higher levels of anxiety are associated with depression, and health problems. But it's not clear what happens when everyone is anxious. Nor is it known how these changes come to affect children.

Clearly, this research should be taken as a warning sign. Modern life is becoming a bit too much. Concerns about safety and violence, war and disease, social isolation and acceptance, job security and perhaps even the quickening pace of life are real. We spend less time with friends and family. We are less likely to trust people, join fewer community organizations. Yet these social bonds and attachment to other people are crucial. Further, these are things we can provide for our children, and for ourselves, to benefit all of us.

Neala Schwartzberg, PhD

Special Books for Parents and Caregivers

When Children are Victims of Trauma

It is an unfortunate fact that even young children experience traumatic events. These are different from the ordinary stresses of life. Traumatic events occur suddenly with no chance for preparation. The events are outside of a youngster's normal experiences. Finally, there is a strong feeling of helplessness. Although adults often want to shield youngsters from their memories of the events a better approach is to understand children's feelings and help them learn to cope.

📖 ***Children and Trauma: A guide for parents and professionals*** by Cynthia Monahon, Jossey-Bass Publishers; San Francisco; 1997; Paperback.

This book is filled with solid information and sensible advice. It describes the kinds of traumatic experiences a youngster may encounter and the signs of resulting trauma.

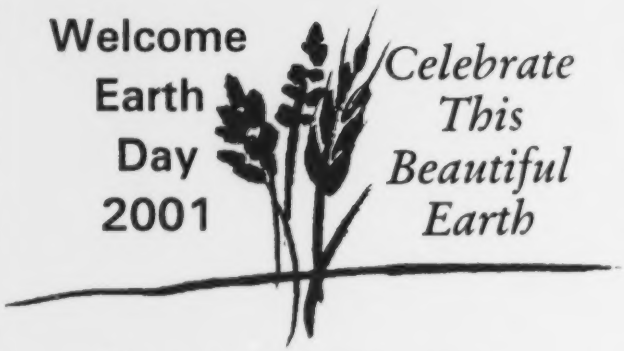
Not all children react the same. Monahon also explains the risk and protective factors that influence a child's subsequent behavior. Another chapter explores the way parents and siblings react both to the event, and to the child's behavior.

There are many ways parents can help their youngsters recover – respect feelings, provide help for flashbacks and panic, provide opportunities for talking about feelings, and more. Monahon describes what to watch and listen for, and what to do. She also includes chapters on recognizing the need for professional help, and kinds of help available.

📖 ***The Scared Child: Helping kids overcome traumatic events*** by Barbara Brooks, PhD, and Paula M. Siegel; John Wiley & Sons, Inc.; New York; 1996; Paperback $14.95.

Dr. Brooks talks about the different kinds and causes of trauma. Car accidents, hurricanes, death of family and friends. Then there is divorce, and even "trauma by proxy" watching devastating events in one's neighborhood, or on television. The result of these experiences can be a type of reaction called post-traumatic stress.

The chapters takes parents and caregivers through recognizing the signs of traumatic stress, debriefing a child by helping the youngster to vent, developing a more complete understanding of what happened, and teaching appropriate coping skills. Dr. Brooks provides detailed step-by-step instructions for each age level, including preschoolers. There are also special sections focusing on specific kinds of trauma such as death of a loved one, natural disasters, and abuse. This is the kind of book that shouldn't be needed, but is needed nonetheless. Parents and other caregivers will find it very helpful.



This Earth Day, April 22, is the 31st anniversary of the birth of the modern environmental movement, which began in 1970. Gaylord Nelson, a Senator from Wisconsin, proposed the first nationwide protest against air pollution. It was a time when Americans were still using leaded gas in our automobiles, polluting the air with unregulated factory smoke and sludge, and experiencing nuclear emissions that were causing concern and distress.

On that first April 22nd, unprecedented numbers of Americans took to the streets to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment. Denis Hayes was the national coordinator. He and his young staff, assisted by thousands of colleges and universities, organized coast-to-coast rallies to protest the deterioration of the environment.

Earth Day has continued from that time until today sending a message that the world wants and needs quick and decisive action towards a clean environment.

We can all become a part of history as we celebrate another Earth Day. How about organizing an Earth Day block party in your neighborhood? You can put together games and food and invite all of your neighbors to participate. Or, you can join one of your local environmental groups in setting up an Earth Day event.

If organizing an event on this scale isn't possible, how about a small "Celebrate Our Earth" party for your children and a few friends. Children can create small bird feeders, plant seedlings, and do other earth-friendly projects. A local library would be a good source for ideas for these activities. Simple refreshments and a story hour, using books that celebrate the environment, to finish the day would be ideal.

Let's begin to see ourselves as citizens of earth by being a part of Earth Day - 2001. Let's take care of our planet by thinking globally and acting locally.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Fresh Fruit Drinks for Spring

In my culinary school years in Brazil, we prepared these punches with fresh fruit juices. The school had an abundance of different types of fruit orchards including banana, fig, grape, guava, lemons, mango, oranges, papaya, passion fruit, pineapple, star fruit, and others! We used the fruits to prepare desserts, make jams, jellies, and juices, as well as to eat them fresh.

We went out, picked the ripest of the fruits, and prepared the juices. To refrigerate them we had to crush the ice from an ice block which was delivered everyday to our school. I particularly remember preparing these punches for parties. When I went home for the weekends I prepared them at home too, and my neighbors always asked me to teach them how to make them.

The soda that we added to the punches was "guarana," which is found in Latin-American supermarkets, but carbonated, or mineral water (or any type of bubbly soda) can be used.

Here are two recipes for ponches (poun-shees) or punches. One light colored, with red fruits, the other red colored garnished with light colored fruits.

Parents take your little ones with you to the supermarket to buy the fruits for the punches. Show them how to choose the fruit by gently pressing with the palms of both hands to feel the ripeness of the fruit.

When you bring the fruits home, let them rest at room temperature for 24 hours, to bring out their flavor. When ready to prepare the punch, let your child rinse and brush the fruits under warm water, then rinse them with cold water. Dry with paper towels.

Heavenly Punch
Ponche Do Ceu

✦ Fruits to garnish the punch:
2 red delicious apples
1/2 pound red grapes
1 pint fresh, or frozen strawberries
1 pint fresh or frozen blueberries

✦ Ingredients for the punch:
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
64 oz. can, or bottle of pineapple juice
64 oz. can or bottle of peach nectar
2- 14 oz. cans of low fat coconut milk
2- 16 oz. bottles bubbly mineral water or soda

• Child: squeeze and measure the lemon juice. Place in a small pan with the sugar.
• Adult: heat the juice mixture until the sugar is fully dissolved. Remove from the heat and cool in the refrigerator. Peel the oranges, remove the white membranes, and cut into small pieces. Place in a bowl. Core and dice the apples and add to the bowl with the oranges.
• Child: Remove the stems from the fresh strawberries. Pick through the blueberries, discarding the bad ones.
• Adult: Cut the strawberries and the grapes into halves. Mix them with the other fruits. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate. Open the bottles of juice. Do not open the sodas.
• Child: pour the lemon juice mixture into the punch bowl. Add the pineapple juice, peach nectar, and coconut milk. Mix with wooden spoon.
• Adult: cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate until time to serve.
➔ At serving time:
• Adult: bring out the punch bowl and open the sodas or sparkling waters.
• Child: put the cut fruits into the punch bowl and pour the soda over them.

Paradise Punch
Ponche Do Paraiso

✦ Fruits to garnish the punch:
6 fresh or frozen peaches
1/2 melon
1 Small cucumber
1/2 pound golden seedless grapes

✦ Ingredients for the punch:
64 oz. red grape juice
64 oz. strawberry juice
32 oz. apple juice
32 oz. sparkling water or bubbly soda

• Adult: peel the peaches, melon, and cucumber. Cut the peaches into halves.
• Child: remove the pits from the peaches. Scoop out the melon and cucumber seeds with a small spoon. Set aside.
• Adult: dice the peaches, melon, and cucumber. Place in a bowl. Cut the grapes into halves, and mix with the other fruits. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.
➔ At Serving Time:
• Adult: remove the fruit bowl from the refrigerator. Open the bottles or cans of juices.
• Child: pour the juices into the punch bowl. Pour the cut up fruits into the punch bowl and mix well. Now, pour the sodas over the fruits.

The punches can be made with other kinds of fruit juice and cut up fruit. Serve these punches at parties and picnics or any festivities. Enjoy these nectars of paradise. You deserve it.

Fruit Juice Molds

If there is any leftover punch, make a molded gelatin with it. Measure 3 cups of leftover punch, dissolve 1 tablespoon of plain, or 1 package of any flavored gelatin in a small amount of juice. Whisk it well to remove all the lumps. Now, add the remaining punch with the fruits and mix well. Pour it into a rinsed mold, and chill. When set and firm to the touch unmold it and serve. Easy and delicious.

Have a glorious spring!
Sandy Allen

Library Resources

When Children Face Challenging Situations

When Children Witness Traumatic Events

📖 ***A Terrible Thing Happened*** by Margaret M. Holmes; illustrated by Cary Pillo; Magination Press; American Psychological Association; Washington, DC, 2000; Hardcover. Sherman is a raccoon who saw something terrible happen. He was so frightened he didn't want to think about it at all. But he was still upset inside. An excellent book to use with children who have experienced or witness something traumatic. It describes Sherman's reaction and how people helped him to feel better.

Babysitters

📖 ***All in One Piece*** by Jill Murphy; PaperStar Books; New York, 1999; Softcover, $5.99. One of the reasons parents leave the house is to go out and enjoy themselves. In this book, the Mr. and Mrs. Large (the elephant parents) are going to a dinner dance. While Mrs. Large gets ready, all the children manage to get into mischief. But, Granny comes to watch the children and the parents leave the house for their big evening.

📖 ***Roo's New Baby-sitter*** by Kathleen W. Zoehfeld; illustrated by Robbin Cuddy; Disney Press; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $11.99. Roo's mother is going shopping and she's asked Winnie-the-Pooh to be a baby-sitter. Roo didn't want to be left home, but he and Pooh have a wonderful time.

📖 ***You Go Away*** by Dorothy Corey; illustrated by Diane Paterson; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 1999; Hardcover $14.95. A simple book appropriate for little ones, repeating the simple message that people go away and come back. Bright pictures depict parents leaving the house, and coming back. Children leaving a room, and coming back. A very reassuring book.

Difficult Transitions

📖 ***Grandmama's Joy*** by Eloise Greenfield; illustrated by Carole Byard; PaperStar Books; New York, 1999; Softcover $5.99. This is a book on a very difficult subject. Rhondy's beloved grandmother is very sad. She and Rhondy have to move and leave their home. Rhondy tries to cheer up her grandmother by reminding her of the story. Rhondy's parents were killed in a car crash when she was just a baby. Her grandmother always told her that as long as Grandmother had Rhondy, she had her joy. And Rhondy knows that as long as she and her Grandmother have each other, they have everything they need. The book is done in monochrome, only the cover is rendered in color.

Faith

📖 ***A Book About God*** by Florence Mary Fitch; illustrated by Henri Sorensen; Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books; New York, reissued, 1998; Hardcover, $16.00. "Sometimes on a sunny afternoon We look up at the blue sky. Sometimes on a winter night, When the stars are big and bright, We think about Him And wish we could see Him." But when we look around our world we see the things that are like Him: the sun that is always shining, the air that is all around us. God's life in every growing thing. A gentle and reassuring book.

Feelings

📖 ***The Feelings Book*** by Todd Parr; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 2000; Hardcover minibook $5.95. Not strictly about negative emotions, this book explores the range of feelings children experience. Accompanied by colorful simple drawings the text expresses "Sometimes I feel silly," to "Sometimes I feel like crying." It ends with the advice: "No matter how you feel, don't keep your feelings to yourself. Share them with someone you love."

📖 ***Monsters Under the Bed Huggly Gets Dressed*** by Tedd Arnold; Scholastic-Cartwheel Books; New York, 1999; Softcover, $3.25. Part of the series about the monsters that live under the bed. We all know that there are no real monsters, but if there were, why would they have to be mean and nasty? Perhaps they are like Huggly and his friends: warm, funny, and even lovable. In this entertaining story Huggly wakes up early and wants to try on the clothes of the human child. Of course, things don't work out the way he planned, especially with the boy's underware sitting on his head as the mother calls out asking if he needs help getting dressed. The boy sleepily tries to tell mom about Huggly. "That goofy monster again?" his mother said. "Tell me all about it."

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En Español

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Los Miedos de los Niños

De Donde Vienen, Cómo Calmarlos

Todos los años nuestra familia es anfitriona de una fiesta del Día del Trabajo, y en la fiesta de este año tuvimos una de esas experiencias de pesadilla que todos los anfitriones temen. Unos niños estaban jugando en el cesped de nuestro jardín y la pelota con que jugaban le pegó a un nido de avispas que no sabíamos existía.

Inmediatamente cientos de avispas encolerizadas se abalanzaron sobre los niños. Cuando los adultos ya habían llevado a los niños a un lugar seguro, varios de los varones habían sido picados, uno de ellos más de 30 veces.

Por suerte habían dos médicos y un policía entre los invitados, por lo tanto todos los niños fueron atendidos inmediatamente. Es innecesario decir que esta fue una experiencia aterradora para todos.

Durante los próximos días, mi esposa y yo nos mantuvimos en estrecho contacto con los padres de los niños más afectados por el ataque de las avispas. Nos sorprendió que el niño que había sido picado más de 30 veces se había recuperado perfectamente después de uno o dos días. Evidentemente que no estaba muy contento con el incidente, pero tampoco estaba traumatizado. El realmente parecía sorprendido por todo el aspaviento de los adultos. Otro niño, sin embargo, que ni siquiera había sido picado aún estaba profundamente asustado más de una semana después del incidente, con pesadillas recurrentes y períodos de llantos inconsolables.

Por qué los niños reaccionan al mismo episodio de maneras tan distintas? Por qué los niños temen algunas cosas y otras no? De donde vienen los temores de los niños y que pueden hacer los padres para tranquilizarlos?

Temores Normales

El temor es una de las emociones humanas más enraizadas, con un valor claro para la auto preservación. El miedo es la emoción que induce cautela, mesura y una aguda sensibilidad hacia los posibles peligros. En el sentido evolutivo básico, el miedo fomenta la supervivencia humana, haciéndonos más concientes de posibles amenazas a nuestro bienestar.

El temor es una emoción especialmente valiosa para los niños, porque, a diferencia de los adultos, los niños son extremadamente vulnerables a todo tipo de peligros. Esto quiere decir que es perfectamente normal para los niños asustarse de muchas cosas distintas -- lugares nuevos, ruidos estrepitosos, personas que no conocen, animales, la oscuridad, y cualquier cosa que los pueda separar de sus padres.

Una manera más positiva de describir este miedo instintivo es diciendo que los niños naturalmente desean su seguridad. Los niños prefieren a gente y lugares conocidos por que innatamente saben que estos ofrecen una mejor oportunidad de atención, bienestar y protección. El temor, en este sentido, es el otro lado de la moneda de un deseo de criarse con felicidad y salud.

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Muchos padres y profesores han tenido experiencia con niños que parecen no tener suficiente temor. Cuando mi hija Maya tenía alrededor de dos años gateaba en un patio elevado sin barandas. Gateaba al borde del patio, miraba el suelo a más de dos metros más abajo y evidentemente decidió, "No hay problema. No hay nada que temer. Yo puedo". La agarré justo cuando estaba retrocediendo y sus piernas estaban sobre el borde. En un caso como este, sería bueno que un niño tuviese un poco más de miedo. Que adoptara un perspectiva algo más cautelosa en cuanto a situaciones que son un riesgo real.

En resumen, el miedo en los niños es natural, normal y bueno -hasta cierto punto. Es justamente cuando se pasa ese punto que cuando ser temeroso es una causa de preocupación.

Distintos Temores a Distintas Edades

Muchos temores están directamente relacionados a temas del desarrollo que surgen en momentos especiales en la vida de un niño. Algunos niños tienen más dificultad con esas cuestiones, mientras que otros tienen menos. Algunos niños superan los temores relacionados a la edad rápidamente mientras que otros se demoran mucho más.

Como todos los aspectos del desarrollo infantil, no existe un modelo común que explique perfectamente la conducta de cada niño. Pero si existen patrones generales y puede ser útil para los padres saber que tipos de experiencias pueden asustar a sus niños en distintas edades.

Los niños hasta la edad de cuatro generalmente se asustan de las amenazas obvias a su bienestar -- animales enormes, vehículos veloces, fuego, las olas del mar, y cosas por el estilo.

Los niños muy chicos también son muy conocidos por dos tipos de un miedo más generalizado: angustia de separación y angustia de extraños. La angustia de separación refleja la bien justificada creencia que entre más lejos están de sus padres, menos seguros están. Los bebés y los retoños a menudo se alarman y atemorizan cuando son separados de sus padres.

La angustia de extraños es una preocupación perfectamente razonable que alguien que no es la persona que habitualmente los cuida es un posible peligro. Los niños demuestran esta angustia cuando una persona desconocida (e incluso una persona que sencillamente no conocen lo suficiente) se acerca demasiado.

En el curso normal del desarrollo, un niño aprende a superar estos temores: no todas las separaciones son peligrosas y no todos los extraños son un peligro.

Los niños en los primeros años de escuela primaria (kindergarten a segundo año primario) frecuentemente desarrollan nuevos temores relacionados a la expansión de sus relaciones con sus pares. A esta edad los niños se preocupan mucho en formar amistades y de ser incluidos en los juegos de otros niños. El cambio en el desarrollo del niño pasa de los temores sobre el bienestar físico a temores sobre el bienestar social. Para un adulto, el patio de un kindergarten pareciese un lugar feliz y tranquilo, pero para un niño de cinco años es un campo minado de posibles rechazos, exclusión y ostracismo.

En los años posteriores de escuela primaria (tercero en adelante) un nuevo conjunto de temores emerge, típicamente relacionado a las tareas. Notas, pruebas, plazos, y tareas se convierten en fuentes de angustias. En la mayoría de los casos las nuevas demandas académicas que se le dan a los niños a esta edad calzan con el desarrollo natural de sus habilidades intelectuales.

A veces, las demandas académicas que se imponen sobre los niños son demasiado pesadas o su habilidad de enfrentar estas demandas se desarrolla lentamente. En este caso, un nivel de preocupación relativamente normal se convierte en una angustia general que conlleva insomnio, irritabilidad, y distanciamiento social.

Miedos Desmedidos

Ser temeroso es una parte normal y natural de crecer para todos los niños. La meta básica para todos los padres y profesores es alentar un miedo sano, realista y proporcional. Un temor sano es uno que está dirigido hacia un peligro existente y que produce una conducta cautelosa. La mayoría de los niños en ciertos momentos desarrollan un temor que no parece realista o proporcional. Su temor natural puede hacer a los niños tan sensibles a posibles peligros que se equivocan siendo demasiado temerosos. En cierto sentido, sobre reaccionan ante una situación.

Por ejemplo, es realista que los niños le tengan miedo al fuego, y es apropiado que ellos sean cautelosos cerca de una cocina a gas, pero no es realista que se asusten de una fotografía del fuego y no sería proporcional que ellos se negaran a entrar a una casa porque hay una cocina a gas.

Los niños también son muy rápidos en generalizar sus temores. Cuando le leo un libro de cuentos a mi hijo menor Tomás sobre dos lobos que son atacados por un agricultor con un rifle, Tomás inmediatamente llegó a la conclusión que todos los agricultores son espantosamente malos. "Cuidado con los agricultores, papi", me advertía solemnemente.

Se necesitó bastante persuasión para convencer a Tomás que la mayoría de los agricultores son en realidad buenos y que no le disparan a cualquier cosa que se mueve. Aunque finalmente estuvo de acuerdo conmigo, sospecho que Tomás seguirá por bastante tiempo sospechando secretamente de los

agricultores.

Es aquí donde los padres y maestros juegan un papel clave en el desarrollo de los niños, ayudándoles a descifrar qué es un temor realista y proporcional y qué no lo es. Se necesita gran paciencia para darle a los niños el tiempo y la orientación que requieren para desarrollar un sentimiento mas cabal de seguridad en el mundo.

Temores Simbólicos

Frecuentemente los temores de los niños tienen poco que ver con cualquier peligro "real". Estos son los más preocupantes para padres y maestros porque ningún racionamiento o convencimiento los ayuda a superar el temor. Mi experiencia es que esos temores frecuentemente simbolizan una amenaza que el niño percibe que él o ella no pueden expresar de ninguna otra manera. En estos casos el miedo es muy real, incluso cuando el aparente objeto de temor no es una amenaza real para el niño.

Por ejemplo, pocos niños han visto o han estado en peligro real de un lobo verdadero, sin embargo los niños les tienen terror. Por qué? Porque los lobos son maravillosos símbolos de otros peligros, como, por ejemplo, sus propios impulsos agresivos o los de sus padres. Un niño puede estar asustado por la ira de un padre, o sus propios pensamientos agresivos pero no tienen el lenguaje para poder expresar estos temores directamente. Lo mismo sucede con los temores de los niños con las brujas, vampiros, momias, fantasmas, y cosas por el estilo. El objeto de su miedo puede no ser "real", pero el miedo en si es real y tiene que ser tomado en serio.

Para volver al cuento del ataque de avispas en la fiesta familiar durante el Día del Trabajo. Tengo la impresión que el niño que quedó asustado por semanas después del incidente había desarrollado un miedo simbólico. La familia del niño había recientemente pasado a través de tiempos duros y sus preocupaciones sobre esa difícil situación parecía haberse expresado a través de su intenso temor a otro ataque de avispas.

Generalmente se necesita bastante trabajo de detective intuitivo para discernir la causa subyacente de esos temores simbólicos, pero el esfuerzo siempre vale la pena. Ayudar a los niños a entender sus propios sentimientos y angustias es una de las mejores maneras de fomentar su vida emocional sana y más auto conocimiento.

Qué Pueden hacer los Padres?

Hay varios pasos que los padres pueden adoptar para ayudar a sus niños a desarrollar un grado sano y apropiado de temor.

1. El primero es obvio: proteja a los niños lo más posible de experiencias que los pueden embargar de miedo. A menudo no es posible hacerlo. Los niños que experimentan accidentes del tránsito, incendios, ataques criminales y otros incidentes traumáticos

están, desafortunadamente, a serio riesgo. Pueden tener dificultades en reestablecer un sentimiento de seguridad en el mundo. Sin embargo, a veces el incidente traumático pudo haber sido evitado. Por ejemplo, no deje a un niño ver una película demasiado violenta.

2. Un segundo paso que puede tomar un padre es reafirmar las fortalezas de sus niños, enfocando especialmente en los temores que los niños han superado exitosamente. Por ejemplo, un niño que estaba inicialmente aterrado del agua pero más adelante aprende a nadar. Esto no parece una gran cosa para los adultos, pero para el niño esto es un gran logro, un hito en su desarrollo emocional. Los padres pueden ayudar a los niños
hacer de logros como este una fuente de inspiración personal. Recordarle periódicamente a los niños de los temores que tenían y elogiarlos por su éxito en superarlos es una manera muy efectiva de reasegurar a los niños que pueden crecer más allá de sus miedos.

3. Un tercer paso es tomar las pesadillas de los niños en serio. Los sueños son un excelente barómetro de la vida emocional del niño. Si hay algo especialmente aterrador en la vida de un niño, uno puede estar seguro que esto aparecerá en sus sueños. Lo mejor que se puede hacer cuando un niño tiene una pesadilla es escuchar. No intente "interpretar" el sueño, no trate de explicarlo, no diga, "es solo un sueño, querido, sigue durmiendo".

El mero hecho de escuchar, con respeto y empatía, la pesadilla le dará una señal al niño que sus emociones son tomadas en serio. No harán que el temor desaparezca, pero al menos el niño no se sentirá solo al tratar de enfrentarlo. (Para más información sobre los sueños de los niños, véase Cuando su Niño Sueña, abril, 2000)

4. Un cuarto paso invita a

los padres y maestros a mirarse a si mismos y preguntar, "Cuales son mis temores más grandes"? Los niños más pequeños generalmente adquieren sus temores de la misma manera que adquieren tanto en la vida, de los adultos que los rodean. De una manera muy real, los temores de los niños son un espejo de los temores de los adultos. Tiene miedo de atrasarse? De hacer el ridículo en publico? De expresar ira? De no tener suficiente dinero? De las personas que se visten o se comportan de una cierta manera? De ser demasiado gordo o demasiado delgado? Cualquiera sea su temor, sus niños seguramente decidirán que es una buena idea tenerle miedo a la misma cosa.

Algunos adultos piensan que pueden ocultar sus temores de sus niños, pero eso es una falacia. Los niños por naturaleza son exquisitamente sensibles a los estados emocionales de sus padres. Ud. puede estar seguro que sus niños tienen una muy, muy buena idea sobre las cosas que lo atemorizan. Si Ud. demuestra coraje para enfrentar sus propios temores y se esfuerza por superarlos, esto tendrá un gran impacto positivo sobre sus niños. La creencia que "si mamá y papá pueden, yo también" le permite a los niños a desarrollar la habilidad de enfrentar y hacer frente a sus propios temores.

Al final de cuentas, eso es lo mejor que pueden hacer los padres: no esconder a sus hijos de todos los peligros del mundo, sino ayudarlos a crecer hasta el punto en que ellos puedan enfrentar esos peligros con valentía y confianza.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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Bringing History and Geography Home

History, in its simplest terms, is the story of humankind, and particularly, that story in written form. But long before written language and printing appeared, there were drawings that recorded events, and stories that were told from tribe to tribe and generation to generation.

When they are pre-readers, young children learn history in the same way – by hearing stories. By virtue of their early age, children have very short histories. They soak up experience like eager sponges and much about life is truly new to them. To help children learn we need to be able to listen to and tell them about **his** story and **her** story.

Children's (Mis)Understanding

One little child had a birthday coming up. His mother prepared cupcakes for a party with his classmates at school. Later that evening there was a family gathering to celebrate the birthday at dinnertime. An "official" children's party was planned for the coming weekend. But Kevin balked at the idea of the final birthday gala – he said he just wanted to be four for awhile! His thinking was that he was going to advance a year at every birthday party.

Another story concerns a three-year-old with barely one winter in her memory bank who was on a walk with her nursery school class in the spring. Running ahead, she came to a spreading cherry tree that had just dropped all its blossoms. The ground was three inches deep in soft, silken pink petals. Emily ran to the tree, threw the petals into the air and declared, "Snow!" From her point of view, why couldn't snow be pink? Why couldn't it happen in May as well as January? After many experiences with cold, icy, white snow, Emily undoubtedly changed her definition of snow. But on that day in May, for her, snow included everything that falls from the sky and thickly covers the ground.

Learning History Starts with Personal and Concrete Experiences

History is collective memory. Children have limited understanding because they have had limited experience. They need many opportunities to encounter life here and now before they can really understand things that happened before they were born. Their developmental task is to construct their world, and as they grow and mature they are constantly refining these mental constructs.

Life is a process of **making** history – the most intimate kind of history, related to family and loved ones and special happenings. One day I was introducing Mother Goose nursery rhymes to a class of four-year-olds. One rather sophisticated little boy declared "That's baby stuff!" "Yes, you're right!" I replied. "My mother read these very same poems to me when I was a baby, and her mother read them to her when she was a baby. Mothers have been reading these rhymes to their children for a very long time." The boy settled in with an expression of rapt attention

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and listened closely for the rest of circle time.

The most powerful stories for children are the ones that you tell them, the ones that make connections in their lives. "When you were just a little baby, I used to rock you in this very same rocking chair." "Before you were born Mommy and Daddy lived in a big apartment house." Children never tire of hearing stories about themselves and about their families.

By contrast, Nicole came home from kindergarten one October day proudly wearing a necklace that she had made. There were little pictures of boats, cut out from a ditto and dutifully colored, and there was a picture of a bearded man in strange clothes. When a grown-up asked her "Who is this and what are these boats?" Nicole had no answer. I'm sure her kindergarten teacher had taught a lesson on Columbus and had talked about the Pinta, the Nina, and the Santa Maria. Unfortunately, there was nothing in Nicole's experience that helped her envision a time when this country was vastly different, sparsely inhabited by people very unlike her family or her neighbors.

Most of us have been brought up to think of history as something we learn about other people, in other times. And there is a place for this kind of learning as the child grows. The early years, however, is a time for the child to experience life in very concrete ways.

Is it harmful to teach pre-scholars about historical figures? Is it harmful for young children to work with the talking globe that spits out information about the capitol cities of the world? Probably not. But it is not very productive, either. It is important to understand the perspective of young children and to discern their ways of thinking about any topics that you discuss with them. If we are going to help them make connections, we must start by listening carefully, and making history part of their every-day lives.

Teaching History

Parents can lay foundations for stimulating children's interest in history by establishing family traditions. Special events and private rituals become something to look forward to and something satisfying and rich to look back on.

Sometimes they begin in the strangest ways. One tradition that has persisted in our family for decades has to do with a hilarious outing to get some ice cream for the whole family, including the dog. For years now that day, May 6th, has been celebrated as Carvel Day in our family. Wherever we are on May 6th, at least one family member calls another across the country to announce, "Today is Carvel Day." The caller thereby becomes the winner of a special ice cream treat. Silly? Perhaps, to anybody who wasn't there, sharing the fun of that first Carvel Day.

There can be weekly rituals or special nighttime routines. Traditions can be associated with seasonal events or how individual families celebrate holidays. (To read more about family rituals see *Family Rituals and Traditions*; P&pN June-2000 Issue; V.15 N.6.)

When dealing with ideas that are more removed from the child's immediate world, we need to be careful to bridge the gap for them. This is why stories that begin "Long ago and far away" set a mysterious tone that immediately says this is different, this is not the here and now.

To foster an understanding of history, you can keep journals with your child, writing the words she dictates and recording significant happenings in her day.

Photograph albums can be made with young children to record the people, events and places that are important to them.

Books that describe things that are closely related to their own experiences piqué their interest and affirm their knowledge base. Carefully, carefully, one

Finding His Way Home

"Tell me some things, Grandma,"
He used to say.
And she would.
She told him about the night his grandpa came home from work and cried because he had lost his job...
And she told him about the day his Aunt Charlotte got her scholarship for college - the first one in the family to go...
And she told him about the summer she planted sunflowers in the window box and they grew so tall the lady upstairs had the flowers and all they saw was stems; that grandpa said covered their window like prison bars...
She told him about the winter they couldn't afford a winter coat for his Daddy and so Daddy wore five sweaters - one on top of the other...
And she told him about the rainy night the cat came to stay...
And about the slice of pot roast sent, every Sunday, to Mr. Bartlet, the old man downstairs who was always alone ...
She told him about the day his Daddy brought Mommy home to meet her and how pretty his Mommy looked in a dress the color of butter and how she could tell in a few minutes that Mommy was as pretty on the inside as she was on the outside...
She told him about the day he was born and how his Mommy and Daddy named him after his great grandpa who was a printer and lived a long time ago...
And about the night, when he was still a baby, and his big Uncle Jim held him in his arms, took him outside and showed him his first snowstorm ...
She told him some things
And he held them in his heart ...
And pretty soon
He found himself in the world.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

can branch out from this base.

By listening to young children (always – but especially in relation to their developing ideas about history and geography) you can extend their understanding at the same time that you help them to feel secure in their world, help them to notice things, to question, and to feel comfortable with change.

Establishing Geography

In similar ways, parents can help children with the concepts, which make up geography.

Think of geography as the child's experience in space. It begins with the home and neighborhood – Mr. Rogers demonstrates this as he takes children through the familiar territory on his TV show. In the same way that they come to know these characters and scenes, children begin to pick up on landmarks as they walk or ride around their community.

They are often very observant about the passing scenes, but they also see the world through their very limited experiences. There was a child who came to school in tears. It turns out that his mother had taken an alternate route to our Center in order to avoid some heavier-than-usual traffic. Sam missed the sight he loved most on his regular journey: a tall green water tower that told him he was almost at the school. He was devastated and perhaps even disoriented when he didn't pass his favorite landmark. His bewildered mother had no way of knowing, before this incident, how much he was taking in on this relatively short trip and how much the sight of the water tower meant to him. Events and places are intricately linked. If we don't pass landmarks how do our children (and sometimes even adults) know where they are?

Everyday shopping trips offer an opportunity for you to help your child put events in place. You can start by explaining beforehand just where you are going – i.e., "First we will stop at the cleaners, then I have to go to the supermarket to buy things for dinner, and afterwards we will stop at Tommy's house." This will enable your child to map the trip in his own head and anticipate each leg of the journey.

Young children can begin to understand and even read simple maps – the block you live on or the route to a favorite nearby place. By making actual drawings of well-known routes with your child, and helping him to follow the path and place the landmarks, you can set the scene for an understanding of geography that is rooted in his own experience.

A "geography" story that I find both amusing and revealing came from my granddaughter. From the time she was a baby, she flew from her home in Denver to visit us in New York. One day when she was three or four, she startled her mother by differentiating her two sets of grandparents in this way: her Denver grandparents and her "grandparents in the sky." As far as little Zarah knew, when she boarded the plane and made her way skyward, she could have landed on another planet, her private "Land of Oz." There was no particular reason for her to know, or to believe, that the plane made a trajectory that landed back on earth.

In contrast parents can use children's concrete thinking to actually broaden their understanding of their world. One family in Michigan devised their own clever method for helping their children to understand the distances they were traveling on car trips. They lived a few miles from Kalamazoo, and went there often. The children knew the twenty-minute ride well and had internalized the length of time it took. When they traveled to other places, their father had a unique way of answering their queries about how long it would take. He would do the calculations in his own mind and then say to the children "It will be like two trips to Kalamazoo," For a foray to Indiana it might be five trips to Kalamazoo. The children could relate to this measure of time and distance, and they quickly settled into the journey.

These are the beginnings of history and geography. Columbus and his voyage to the new world should be tackled much later and will be understood then in the context of much broader experience with the world, with books and with ideas.

Alice C. Brown, MA is the Director of the Adelphi University Child Activity Center in Garden City, New York. She is also active in advocacy issues for young children and their families.

Activities to Encourage a Love of History and Geography

These activities should be fun. If your children aren't enjoying themselves, try a different project. The goal is to have a good time and lay the groundwork for further interests and learning.

Food -- Making Bread: One delicious way to learn about different cultures is through their foods. Just about all cultures and countries have some form of bread. This activity will let your youngster taste different breads, learn the country of origin, and even learn how to bake!

What to Do

Make a list of all the different kinds of breads from around the world (e.g. tortillas, bagels, French baguettes, pita, sandwich bread, Italian semolina bread). Decide which breads you and your child would like to bake, or buy. Discuss them. After you have tried them, discuss which breads you liked and why.

Look at a globe and match the countries and the breads that are eaten there. Explore the kinds of flours used in bread baking around the world.

Shelter/Home: Help your child understand that everyone needs to be protected from the weather and that the homes people have change over time and in different countries.

What to Do

Talk about homes, your home, and other people's homes, as well as animal homes. Go on a walk around the neighborhood or take a drive. Look at the ways people live. Invite your child to design a shelter for himself. Let him draw it, or create it with fabric, sticks, paper. Talk about what a shelter needs to have if you were really going to live in it.

Visit historical villages to see how people lived in earlier times and what their houses were like. Look in books to see a variety of shelters including those of different cultures and styles of architecture.

* These activities have been adapted from projects developed by Anne Stribling, M.Ed. Ms. Stribling has been an early childhood and primary teacher, a children's literature consultant, and a writer and editor of educational books and publications. She holds a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education, and has developed a Social Studies program for Grades K - 2.

Dear Reader

When my son was quite young my husband and I would drive down to Florida to see family. The trip down the I-95 corridor was very long. We certainly didn't want to hear the words "How long to Grandma's," every 30 minutes. But how could we convey the length of the trip from New York in a way he'd understand?

We ended up telling him "We'll drive all day, sleep in a hotel, drive all day the next day and sleep in Grandma's house." We also cleverly (we thought) used mile markers to let him know how far we had traveled in a state. And, of course, crossing each state's border was quite the event.

This worked out fine...until we crossed the Florida state line. We got out at the tourist information center to stretch our legs, sighed with pleasure for finally making it to Florida and then told our son, "okay, let's get back into the car." The next thing we knew he was throwing a full-blown tantrum, refusing to get into the car. Why? In between the tears he explained "We in Florida." And so we were. In vain we explained about the length of the state and that Grandma lived at the other end. Finally, we simply scooped him up and proceeded down the road.

History and geography are intensely concrete and personal to young children. That's the way they interpret it, understand it, and how we need to teach them about it. This month, Alice Brown returns with another gentle and wise article on encouraging young children to learn and love history and geography. Try some of the activities that accompany the article for enjoyable and educational times with your child.

May is National Stuttering Month and the Health Corner focuses on this problem. Since my son stuttered as a child (and still does when he gets very excited) I know that parental attitude and, when appropriate, professional involvement make an important difference. We also have information on that summer problem...ticks.

Take a walk with your youngster and enjoy the flowers.

Neala Schwartzberg

Using Your Business Travel to Teach Your Child About Geography

Parents who travel for business are in a special position to encourage their youngsters' knowledge of geography. After all, a parent's presence in a distant city, state, or country is a powerful reason to learn more.

Where Are You Going?

Using a map or atlas, tracing paper, and a pencil, trace the outline of your destination (state, country, or province). Then draw a large dot on the city or town where you'll stay. For older kids, mark other nearby areas.

Have your children page through the atlas or go to the map to see where the drawing "fits." Challenge your kids to fill in the missing names of the places you've traced and marked.

Make a Travel Journal

With a stapler, two pieces of construction paper, and some notebook paper, you can create a homemade travel journal together. Make the front and back covers from the construction paper, and use the notebook paper for the interior pages. Staple the journal together and ask your kids to decorate it for you.

Start a collection of travel journals for your child, one for each trip you take. Record your thoughts in the journal while you're away. Include collections of items that interest them like postcards of famous buildings or animals as well as writings to them that they can enjoy even years later.

Picture This

Take pictures to show or send to your children so they can see what it's like where you were. Have your children take pictures, too, so when you return they can show you what they did and saw while you were away.

Buy disposable cameras so you won't have to worry about having an expensive camera damaged, lost or stolen. Ask your children to make a picture book using their photos, or make one together after you've had both sets of photos developed.

Travel Place Mats

Together with your child, glue paper artwork and other materials to the construction paper, then color and decorate as you please. Use odds and ends from your travel – postcards, stationery, or other paper items you bring home. On each one write the date of each creation. When your designs are complete take them to a copy center that has a laminating machine and have them laminated. They will then be water- and food-proof and able to be wiped clean after use.

These activities have been excerpted and adapted with permission from "The Business Traveling Parent: How to stay close to your kids when you're far away" by Dan Verdick; Robins Lane Press, 2000 (a division of Gryphon House, Inc.), Beltsville, MD, phone: 1 800 638-0928. Softcover, $14.95. Although we've used it as a source of ideas to make geographical information accessible to children, this book is filled with wonderful ways for parents to make their business trips a positive part of their children's lives.

Letters from a Father's Heart ...

One special father took time during his business travels to write his daughter some special notes. He always mentioned that, even though he was away, thoughts of her were in his mind and heart.

He would think of ways in which the place where he was reminded him of something about her. When he was in Japan, he noticed how a special food he had eaten made him think of her because he was sure she would have loved it.

When she was a very young child, before she could read, he drew a picture for her and when he returned they talked about it and about his adventures while traveling.

As she got older the communication became notes which were longer and more personal. While in Turkey, he told her about visiting his colleague's home and how different his daughters were from her in the way they lived and thought.

She saved those many notes and pictures and assembled them in a scrapbook that is now one of her most treasured possessions as a young adult. And all because a father took five minutes of his time, while he was away, to think of his child and tell her so.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Inventions: Quill Pens & Berry Ink

Part of history is the way we have invented tools and techniques to solve problems. Knowing how to write has been a valued skill throughout history. From the first instances of cuneiform writing of the peoples of the fertile crescent to the Egyptian hieroglyphics we see in museums today, the written word has had great resonance and meaning to all human beings. Over the centuries many ancient customs and traditions, as well as factual history, have been lost because a cultural group had no tradition of written language.

This would be an ideal time to talk to your child about writing and its historical importance.

Writing itself has changed over time from scratches on clay to computerized letters. In this activity your youngster can compare how people write today with how people wrote in the past using quill pens. Discuss all of the ways in which we can write (i.e. script, printing) and all of the different kinds of mechanical printing available to us today.

What you'll need

For quill pen:
feather
scissors
a paper clip

For berry ink:
1/2 cup of ripe berries
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon vinegar
food strainer
bowl
wooden spoon
small jar with tight-fitting lid

Note: You'll also need writing paper and a paper towel

What to do

1. **Make the ink:** Collect some berries for your ink. Consider what color you want your ink to be, and what berries are available. Make only as much as you think you will use at one time, because it will dry up quickly.

Blueberries, cherries, blackberries, strawberries, or raspberries work well. Fill the strainer with berries and hold it over the bowl. Crush the berries against the strainer with the wooden spoon so that the berry juice drips into the bowl. When all the juice is out of the berries, throw the pulp away. Add the salt and vinegar to the berry juice and stir well. If the ink is too thick, add a teaspoon or two of water, but don't add too much or you'll lose the color. Store the ink in a small jar with a tight-fitting lid.

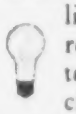
2. **Make the pen:** Find a feather. Form the pen point by cutting the fat end of the quill on an angle, curving the cut slightly. A good pair of scissors is safer than a knife. Clean out the inside of the quill so that the ink will flow to the point. Use the end of a paper clip if needed. You may want to cut a center slit in the point; however, if you press too hard on the pen when you write, it may split.

3. **Write with the pen:** Dip just the tip of the pen in the ink, and keep a paper towel handy to use as an ink blotter. Experiment by drawing lines, curves, and single letters, and by holding the pen at different angles. Most people press too hard or stop too long in one spot.

4. If your child can, let him practice signing his name, or copying the letters. Now, write it again using a pen or pencil. Compare the results. Which is easier? Neater? Which would you want to use on a daily basis?

Going Further

Select another invention (e.g. the light bulb, the refrigerator, telephone, electricity) and talk about what life was like before it was created. What did people do instead? Investigate the circumstances around its invention.



Adapted from: "Helping Your Child Learn History" by Elaine Wrisley Reed; Illustrated by Brian A. Griffin. U.S. Department of Education - Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

moving?

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And don't forget to notify your local Post Office as well.

STUTTERING

One of the most important things to know about stuttering and young children is that it is surprisingly common. Children hesitate over a word, repeat the word or its initial sounds. They are just learning to talk and, like anyone acquiring a new skill, they aren't always very good at it. But there are some youngsters who have many difficulties, and specific kinds that signal problems.

If you think your preschooler may have a speech disorder, the Stuttering Foundation of America suggests that you talk to other parents and teachers to see if they've noticed a problem or if your child's speech disfluencies are different from those of the other youngsters. If your youngster has become anxious and frustrated over her own speech difficulties, reassure her that you will try to help her, and find a licensed speech pathologist.

Before you hurry off to a speech and language professional here are some things you can do at home.

Listen to the child in a calm and patient way. Don't try to hurry her, or finish her sentences. When you talk to your child try to relax and slow down the pace of the conversation.

Use your facial expressions and other body language to convey to your child that you are listening to the content of his message and not to the way he's talking.

Set aside a few minutes each day to give your child your undivided attention. Let your child choose what she would like to do. Let her decide the activities and whether she wants to talk or not. When you talk, remember to use slow, calm, relaxed speech. With plenty of pauses.

Help all members of the family and those who care for your youngster to take turns talking and listening. Children, especially those who stutter, find it much easier to talk when there are few interruptions and they have the listeners' attention.

Above all, convey that you accept your child as he is. Your own slower, more relaxed speech and the things you do will help build his confidence as a speaker. This, in turn, will help to increase his fluency and diminish his stuttering.

In most cases as a child's language abilities mature his speech will become more fluent.

✦ *To Learn More About Stuttering*

The Stuttering Foundation of America is a nonprofit organization established in 1947. They offer several 30-minute videos for $5.00 (to cover postage and handling) as well as guides and booklets ($1.00) in English and Spanish. Contact them at: Stuttering Foundation of America 3100 Walnut Grove Road, Suite 603; PO Box 11749; Memphis, TN 38111-0749. Call them at 1-800-992-9392, or visit their website at http://www.stutteringhelp.org

LYME DISEASE & TICK BITES

Lyme disease is a major health problem for those who come in contact with the deer tick (*Ixodes scapularis*) while enjoying wooded areas. Deer ticks get infected with a bacterium known as *Borrelia burgdorferi* when they feed on an infected animal such as the white-tailed deer, and other mammals. If this infected tick then feeds on a human, the bacteria can pass to that human's body and cause Lyme disease.

• The Symptoms?

Lyme disease may first become evident by a red, slowly expanding "bulls eye" rash at the bite site. Other early symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, stiff neck, muscle aches, and joint pain. If not treated, Lyme disease can cause swelling and pain in the large joints, neurological problems (such as facial palsy and inflammation of the brain), and in rare cases, cardiac problems (such as an enlarged heart). Lyme disease is rarely, if ever, fatal.

• How is Lyme Disease Treated?

Antibiotics are the usual treatment for Lyme Disease and this treatment is usually successful.

• How Can We Avoid Tick Bites?

Recommendations from the New York State Department of Health include:

• Especially from May through September, avoid places where deer ticks thrive. These include heavily wooded areas with tall, dense brush. Walk in the center of trails and avoid rubbing against brush and grass.

• Use an insect repellent containing DEET. Follow directions for its safe use on clothing and exposed skin.

• Wear clothing that protects you. A hat, long-sleeved shirt, long pants tucked into socks and light colored clothing are recommended. Light colored clothing will help you to see the ticks.

• When coming indoors, check your body and have someone else check areas that you can not easily see. Examine scalps and backs especially.

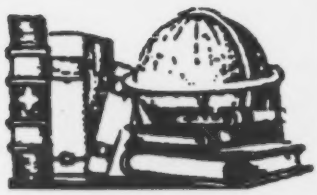
NOTE: If you are around heavily infested areas, the Center for Disease Control advises that the Lyme Disease vaccine be considered for people 15 to 70 years old. This vaccine is known as LYMRrix™. Consult your doctor.

• What Happens If a Tick Bites?

Remove ticks with a fine-tipped tweezers, grabbing the mouth of the tick as close to the skin as possible. Gently and steadily pull the tick out without twisting or squeezing. Never use gasoline, kerosene, petroleum jelly, or hot matches to remove ticks.

After removing the tick, wash the area of the bite thoroughly, apply an antiseptic, and watch for symptoms. Contact your physician if you detect any sign of Lyme Disease symptoms.

This information was provided by the Medical Society of the State of New York. For health-related information and referrals to physicians in your community, contact your local county medical society.



Library Resources

History & Geography

📖 ***50 Simple Things You Can do to Raise a Child who Loves History & Geography*** by Anne Stribling, M.Ed, Simon & Schuster Macmillan Company, New York, 1997; Paperback, $11.95. One of our favorite books for helping little ones develop an understanding of history and geography. Forget about expensive software programs and start with the basics. As the title says, 50 activities to do with your child, starting with a listing of the things you'll need, how to get started, what to do, and suggestions for taking the basic activity further.

📖 ***Across America, I Love You*** by Christine Loomis; illustrated by Kate Kiesler; Hyperion Books; New York, 2000; Hardcover, $15.99. A lyrical ode in which a mother connects the love and hopes for her child to the joys and beauty of America – from the forests of northern California "where the branches of giant sequoias reach up to rock the moon and cradle the Western sky," to New England where "crested drifts of snow fill the forests, bending boughs and shaping the land anew."

📖 ***Basket Moon*** by Mary Lyn Ray; illustrated by Barbara Cooney; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover $15.95. In a different time and a different place a young boy learns that the outside world doesn't understand or appreciate his hillbilly family or their talent for making beautiful baskets. But he also discovers that there is much to love about the beauty and art of basketry.

📖 ***Franklin's Neighborhood*** by Paulette Bourgeois; illustrated by Brenda Clark; Scholastic Inc.; New York, 1999; Softcover $4.50. Franklin's school assignment is to draw a picture of what he likes best about his neighborhood. At the end he decides his favorite part of the neighborhood is his neighbors. Before he reaches that decision, he explores all the places in his world.

📖 ***Gather Up, Gather In: A book of seasons*** by M. C. Helldorfer; illustrated by Judy Pedersen; Puffin Books; New York, 1998; Softcover $5.99. A celebration of all the seasons. The joys of autumn, with pumpkin patches and south-ward flying geese. Winter, with frosty windows and squirrels opening their hoards of nuts. There's no stopping spring, spilling down the mountainsides, splashing yards with flowers. Finally, summer comes with roses and fruit trees and ocean waves.

📖 ***Gold Fever*** by Verla Kay; illustrations by S. D. Schindler; G P Putnam's Sons; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. The call of "Gold" echoed through the hills and miners who wanted to become rich flooded the gold fields in 1849. Jasper was among the dreamers who headed to California. Told in short catchy rhymes, with pictures showing the perils and setbacks. Finally. Jason returns home. "Family waiting, 'Where's the gold?' Jasper shrugging, 'Warn't like told."

📖 ***Iron Horses*** by Verla Kay; illustrated by Michael McCurdy; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York, 1999; Hardcover, $15.99. The story of the creation of the transcontinental railroad told in Kay's short, catchy rhymes and dramatically illustrated using scratch board and watercolor.

📖 ***Minty: A story of young Harriet Tubman*** by Alan Schroeder; illustrated by Jerry Pinkney; Puffin Books; New York, 2000; Softcover $6.99. Although some scenes have been created to engage the reader, this book attempts to be true to the childhood of Harriet Tubman (born Araminta and nicknamed Minty) who helped hundreds of slaves escape north to freedom through the Underground Railroad.

📖 ***World Water Watch*** by Michelle Koch; Mulberry Paperback, New York, 1999; Softcover $4.95. This is clearly a book with a message: care for the earth, especially the oceans, and the creatures who live in it. Narration by children in different parts of the earth frames the message in this important book. Sea otters in the seas of Alaska. These and other creatures are in danger. Oil spills endanger the otters by matting their fur so they can't float and making them ill. "Otters cannot survive unless we keep our oceans clean." Not all is gloomy, the sea turtles in Mexican waters are now protected by the government of Mexico, "our green sea turtles once again swim safely in the ocean."

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La Historia y la Geografía en Casa

La historia, en términos más sencillos, es la historia de la humanidad, y, especialmente, en forma escrita. Pero mucho antes que apareciera el lenguaje escrito y la imprenta, existían dibujos que recordaban eventos y cuentos que se contaban de tribu a tribu y de generación en generación.

Cuando los niños chicos todavía no saben leer, ellos aprenden la historia de la misma manera – escuchando cuentos. Debido a su temprana edad, los niños tienen historias muy breves. Ellos asimilan las experiencias como voraces esponjas y mucho sobre la vida es realmente nuevo para ellos. Para ayudar a los niños a aprender tenemos que estar dispuestos a escuchar y contarle la historia de **ella** y de **el**.

La (In)Comprensión de los Niños

A un pequeño niño se le aproximaba su cumpleaños. Su madre le preparó pasteles para la fiesta con sus compañeros en el colegio. Más tarde hubo una reunión familiar para celebrar el cumpleaños durante la cena. Una fiesta infantil "oficial" fue planeada para el siguiente fin de semana. Pero a Alfonso no le gustó la idea de una fiesta de gala final – diciendo que él sólo quería tener cuatro años por un tiempo! Él pensaba que iba a tener un año más en cada fiestas de cumpleaños.

Otro cuento se refiere a un niño de tres años con solo un invierno en su banco de memoria que estaba en un paseo con su jardín infantil durante la primavera. Al adelantarse, se encontró con un frondoso cerezo que había perdido sus flores. El suelo estaba cubierto con 10 centímetros de suaves pétalos rosados. Emilia corrió hacia el árbol y tiró los pétalos al aire y dijo, "nieve"! Desde su punto de vista, por qué la nieve no podía ser rosada? Por qué no podía caer en mayo y también en enero? Después de muchas experiencias con nieve blanca y fría, Emilia seguramente cambió su definición de nieve. Pero ese día de mayo, para ella la nieve incluía todo lo que cae del cielo y cubre la tierra.

Aprender Historia Empieza con Experiencias Personales y Concretas

La historia es la memoria colectiva. Los niños tienen una comprensión limitada porque han tenido experiencias limitadas. Necesitan muchas oportunidades para enfrentar la vida en el presente antes que realmente puedan comprender las cosas que pasaron antes que nacieran. Su tarea en el desarrollo es construir su mundo, y a medida que crecen y maduran, están constantemente refinando estas creaciones mentales.

La vida es un proceso de **hacer** historia – el tipo de historia más intima, relacionada con la familia, seres queridos y eventos especiales. Un día yo estaba presentando rimas de Mother Goose a una clase de niños de cuatro años. Un niño bastante sofisticado dijo, "Esas son cosas para los bebés"! "Si, tienes razón"! le contesté. "mi mamá me leía los mismos poemas cuando yo era bebé, y su mamá se los leía a ella cuando ella era bebé. Las mamás han estado leyendo estas rimas a sus niños por mucho tiempo". El niño se quedó con una expresión de plena

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atención y escucho cuidadosamente el resto del tiempo.

Los cuentos más fuertes para los niños son los que Ud. les cuenta, los que tienen alguna conexión con sus vidas. "Cuando tú eras un pequeño bebé, yo te mecía en la misma silla mecedora". "Antes que nacieras, el papá y la mami vivían en un edificio de departamentos". Los niños nunca se aburren de escuchar cuentos sobre si mismos o sobre sus familias.

Inversamente, Nicole llegó a la casa de su kindergarten un día de octubre orgullosamente luciendo un collar que ella había hecho. Eran dibujos de botes, cuidadosamente recortados y pintados de un modelo, y también había un dibujo de un hombre con barba que vestía ropas extrañas. Cuando un adulto le preguntó, "Quién es ese y qué son esos botes"? Nicole no tenía respuesta. Estoy segura que la maestra de kindergarten había dado una charla sobre Colón y había hablado sobre la Niña, la Pinta y la Santa María. Desafortunadamente no había nada en la experiencia de Nicole que la ayudó a imaginarse una época en que este país era totalmente distinto, habitado por unas pocas personas muy distintas a su familia o a sus vecinos.

La mayoría de nosotros hemos sido criados a pensar de la historia como algo que se aprende sobre otras personas, en otros tiempos. Y hay un lugar para este tipo de educación a medida que el niño crece. Sin embargo, los primeros años son un momento para que el niño experimente la vida de maneras muy concretas.

Es dañino enseñarles a los preescolares sobre personajes históricos? Es dañino para los párvulos trabajar con el globo terráqueo parlante que dispensa información sobre las capitales del mundo? Probablemente no lo es. Pero tampoco es muy productivo. Es importante comprender la perspectiva de los niños pequeños y discernir sus maneras de pensar sobre los temas que Ud. discute con ellos. Si los vamos a ayudar a que relacionen las cosas, debemos empezar por escuchar cuidadosamente y hacer de la historia una parte de su vida cotidiana.

Enseñando Historia

Los padres pueden sentar las bases para estimular el interés de los niños en la historia estableciendo tradiciones familiares. Acontecimientos especiales y ritos privados se convierten en cosas que los niños esperan con anticipación y algo que satisface y es excelente para rememorar.

A veces esto comienza de las maneras más insólitas. Una tradición que ha persistido en nuestra familia por décadas tiene que ver con un paseo divertidísimo a comprar helados para toda la familia, incluyendo al perro. Por años ese día, el 6 de mayo, ha sido celebrado como el Día Carvel en nuestra familia. Dondequiera que estemos el 6 de mayo, por lo menos un miembro de la familia llama a otro en otra parte del país para anunciar. "Hoy es el Día Carvel". El que llama se convierte en el ganador de un premio especial de helados. Tontería? Quizás para cualquier persona que no estuvo ahí, compartiendo la alegría de ese primer Día Carvel.

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Pueden existir ritos semanales o costumbres especiales vespertinas. Las tradiciones pueden relacionarse a eventos de la estación del año o como las distintas familias celebran los días festivos. (Para leer más sobre ritos familiares vease *Ritos Familiares* y *Tradiciones*; P&P Edición junio 2000.)

Al enfrentar ideas que están más alejadas del mundo inmediato del niño, tenemos que tener cuidado de poder superar la distancia para ellos. Por eso los cuentos que comienzan, "Hace mucho tiempo y muy lejos" dan un tono misterioso que inmediatamente dice que esto es diferente, no es el aquí y ahora.

Para fomentar una comprensión de la historia, Ud. puede tener un diario de vida con su hija, anotando las palabras que dicta y apuntando los acontecimientos importantes del día.

Se pueden hacer álbumes de fotografías con los niños chicos para hacer una crónica de las personas, eventos, y lugares que son importantes para ellos.

Los libros que describen cosas que están estrechamente relacionadas a sus propias experiencias les despierta interés y reafirman su base de conocimientos. Con mucho cuidado, uno puede explayarse de esa base. Escuchando a los pequeños (siempre - pero especialmente en cuanto a sus ideas en desarrollo sobre historia y geografía). Ud. puede ampliar su comprensión al mismo tiempo que los ayuda a sentirse seguros en su mundo, a ayudarlos a notar cosas, a cuestionar, y a sentirse cómodos con los cambios.

Integrando la Geografía

De una manera similar los padres pueden ayudar a los niños con los conceptos que constituyen la geografía.

Piense sobre la geografía como la experiencia de un niño en el espacio. Empieza con el hogar y el barrio -- Mr. Rogers demuestra esto a medida que pasea a los niños a través de territorio conocido en su programa de televisión. De la misma manera que ellos empiezan a conocer estos personajes y escenas, los niños empiezan a escoger hitos a medida que caminan o viajan en su comunidad.

Frecuentemente son muy observadores en cuanto a los panoramas que ven al pasar, pero también miran el mundo a través de sus experiencias muy limitadas. Una vez un niño llegó al colegio llorando. La razón era que su mamá había tomado una ruta alternativa a nuestro centro para evitar una congestión del transito más fuerte de lo usual. Samuel echaba de menos la vista que más quería en su viaje habitual: una torre para

almacenar agua que le señalaba que estaba casi por llegar al colegio. Esta desconsolado y quizás desorientado cuando no había pasado por su hito

favorito. Su madre confundida no tenía manera de saber, antes de este incidente, cuanto estaba captando durante este viaje relativamente corto y cuanto significado tenía esa torre de agua para él. Los eventos y los lugares están íntimamente relacionados. Si no pasamos estos hitos cómo van a saber nuestros niños (y, a veces, incluso los adultos) donde están?

Los viajes de compras ofrecen una oportunidad para que Ud. le ayude a su niño a poner estos eventos en contexto. Ud. puede empezar explicándole de antemano a donde van a ir - por ejemplo, "Primero vamos a pasar por la tintorería, después tengo que ir al supermercado a comprar cosas para la cena, y después vamos a pasar a la casa de Tomás". Esto le permitirá a su niño a trazar un mapa mental y anticipar cada tramo del viaje. Los niños pequeños pueden empezar a comprender e incluso a leer mapas sencillos -- la cuadra en que vive y la ruta hacia su lugar favorito. Al hacer dibujos de rutas conocidas con su hija y al ayudarle a seguir el camino y saber donde están los hitos, Ud. puede sentar las bases para una comprensión de la geografía que está basada en su propia experiencia.

Un cuento de "geografía" que encuentro decidor y divertido se refiere a mi nieta. Desde que fue bebé, ella volaba desde Denver que era su hogar a visitarnos en Nueva York. Un día cuando tenía tres o cuatro años, asombró a su madre diferenciando a sus dos conjuntos de abuelos de la siguiente manera: sus abuelos de Denver y sus "abuelos del cielo". Hasta donde sabía la pequeña Sara, cuando se subía al avión y se remontaba al cielo, ella podía haber aterrizado en otro planeta, su propia "Tierra de Oz". No existía razón especifica para que ella supiera, o creyese, que el avión tenía un trayecto que lo hacía aterrizar en la tierra.

Por otro lado, los padres pueden utilizar la manera concreta en que piensan los niños para ampliar su comprensión del mundo. Una familia del estado de Michigan desarrolló su propio método ingenioso para ayudar a sus niños a comprender las distancias cuando hacían sus viajes en automóvil. Vivían a pocos kilómetros de Kalamazoo y lo visitaban frecuentemente. Los niños conocían el viaje de veinte minutos bien y habían comprendido bien el tiempo que se demoraba. Cuando iban a otros lugares, su padre tenía una manera especial de contestar sus preguntas sobre cuanto tiempo se iban a demorar. El hacía los cálculos mentales y le decía a los niños "Será como dos viajes a Kalamazoo", o para un viaje a Indiana podrían ser cinco viajes a Kalamazoo. Los niños podían relacionarse a esta medición de tiempo y espacio y rápidamente se acostumbraban al viaje.

Estos son los inicios de la historia y la geografía. Colón y su viaje al nuevo mundo debe ser enfrentado mucho después y así será comprendido en el contexto de una experiencia con el mundo mucho más amplia, con libros y con ideas.

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Actividades Para Alentar el Amor a la Geografía y la Historia.

Estas actividades deben ser entretenidas. Si sus niños no las están gozando, intente un proyecto distinto. La meta es pasarlo bien y sentar las bases para otros intereses y aprendizajes.

Comida – Hacer Pan: Una manera deliciosa de aprender sobre distintas culturas es a través de su comida. Casi todas las culturas y países tienen alguna forma de pan. Esta actividad le permitirá a su niño probar distintos tipos de pan, aprender sobre el país de origen e incluso aprender a hornear.

Que Hacer

Haga una lista de todos los distintos tipos de pan de distintas partes del mundo (Ej. Tortillas, bagels, baguettes [pan francés], pita, pan de sándwich, pan italiano). Decida que tipo de pan les gustaría preparar o comprar a Ud. y su hija. Converse sobre ellos. Después de haberlos probado, discuta que panes les gustó y por qué.

Miren el globo terráqueo y calcen los países con los panes que se comen ahí. Explore los distintos tipos de harinas usadas en la preparación del pan en distintas partes del mundo.

Refugio / casa: Ayúdele a su hijo comprender que todos necesitan protegerse del clima y que las casas que tiene la gente cambian a través del tiempo y en distintos países.

Que Hacer

Converse sobre casas, su hogar y los hogares de otra gente, y también las casas de los animales. De un paseo por el barrio o salga en automóvil. Observe las distintas maneras en que vive la gente. Invite a su hijo a que diseñe un refugio para si mismo. Déjelo dibujarlo, o crearlo de tela, palos, papel. Hable sobre que debe tener un refugio si uno fuese a realmente vivir en el.

Visite aldeas históricas para ver como vivía la gente en antaño y como eran sus casas. Mire en libros para ver una variedad de refugios, incluyendo los de distintas culturas y estilos arquitectónicos.

Estas actividades han sido adaptadas de proyectos desarrollados por Anne Stribling, Magíster en Educación. Stribling has sido maestra de párvulos y de primaria, consultora en literatura infantil, y autora y editora de libros educacionales y publicaciones. Ella tiene un Magíster en Educación de Párvulos y ha desarrollado un programa de estudios sociales para los cursos de kindergarten hasta segundo grado de primaria.

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NEWSLETTER

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Parenting Lessons

Learning How to Parent from Our Own Parents

Every so often we hear someone exclaim that people ought to have a class where they learn how to be parents. Actually, we've all taken this class already -- growing up in our own families. Much of what we learn about parenting comes from our own experiences of being parented.

Sometimes the lessons are obvious.We learn by watching what our parents do and using them as a model -- either a positive model that we want to keep and emulate or a negative model that we want to avoid.

Other lessons are less obvious. They are created by the way we are treated by our parents and form a view of ourselves and the world. These more subtle lessons also shape our perceptions and guide our actions.

Recreating the Positive

We all want to recreate positive experiences we had in our childhood. The bed-time stories, bath time play, family holiday dinners. We learn from our parents and pass these lessons on to our own children.

Miranda, for example, grew up in a close-knit family where children pitched in to help do family chores. Although she didn't always appreciate having to do the chores on Saturday mornings, looking back she knows she learned a lot about team work, cooperation, and responsibility from the experience. She also remembers the feelings of pride and accomplishment when her parents gave their seal of approval to her efforts. Now that she's a parent, and over her own children's occasional protests, she has kept family chore day a part of her family's weekly routine. She wants to convey these values that she learned on to her own children.

Avoid the Negative

Parents may also use their negative experiences from childhood as a kind of anti-model. Instead of recreating these experiences, we keep them in mind to avoid repeating our parents' mistakes. People may recall the harsh discipline from a generation or two ago and vow never to do the same to their own children.

Sometimes, in an attempt to avoid the mistakes of our parents, we may go the opposite extreme. A father who was both emotionally and materially deprived as a child gives his own daughter everything he missed, and more. As a result, his daughter is growing up spoiled and demanding. And she isn't

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learning how to do her own share in nurturing and maintaining relationships with others.

A mother who remembers her cold and perfectionist parents does not want her children to experience that sense of distance she felt from her own parents. She can't bear when her children pout or storm out of the room when she tries to correct their behavior so she hasn't been able to set clear limits for her sons, especially when the two boys fight. As a result, the younger son feels unprotected from his older brother's attacks. He reacts by becoming increasingly violent. The battles between the siblings escalate.

Unspoken Messages

If people look at their own behavior, they can usually see how their actions are like and unlike their parents' actions. But childhood experiences also exert a less obvious influence. They affect our understanding of the way relationships operate and create a view of who we are and what we can expect from the people around us.

Parents who react to their children with anger or annoyance send a different message than those who react with love and patience. Gradually, over time, children create an "internal working model." This model reflects the child's sense of himself, others, and these relationships. For example: others will be approachable or cold. Some will be "I am okay the way I am" or "I must be perfect for others to love me."

Children use these models to interpret events and experiences. If a parent is yelling, what does that mean? A generally warm parent has momentarily lost control? Or, will a child interpret this as just another piece of proof that she's a bad child.

These models and interpretations also affect children's future interactions. If you've ever thought "don't start that again" when faced by a stone-faced youngster (or when thinking back to your relationship with your parents) then you know that our past experiences color the ways we interpret the actions of others and the actions we take in anticipation.

When these past experiences are positive, they carry into current relationships. Robert's parents believed in balancing their love and warmth with clear limits and values. Their warmth and generally positive regard for him gave him a sense that he was basically all right the way he was. They helped him learn the consequences of his actions and expressed their clear displeasure when his behavior was out of the bounds of their family values. He grew up trusting that others would generally approach him in a positive way, that they would also let him know if he did something that was problematic, and that there was also a way to solve this problem. As a father, he was able to develop the same kinds of relationships with his own children.

In contrast, Charles grew up in a chaotic family, with many siblings. His overwhelmed mother generally ignored Charles and his brothers and sisters. The youngest in the family, he was often terrorized by his siblings. As a result he grew up feeling powerless and believing that no one could be counted upon for love or support. The chaos and casual violence led Charles to fear that people could easily get out of control.

His reaction, when he became a father, was to provide a strong sense of order and adopt a military model of family life. His children replied "Yes, sir" when he gave them "orders from headquarters." He carefully inspected their work and pronounced it worthy of the family standards. This gave him a sense of control and kept things orderly. It somehow felt like an antidote to his childhood feelings of powerlessness, chaos, and fear.

It Can be Difficult to Change

Charles' ideas about the world were formed early and did not change as he grew to adulthood. While these ideas are not etched in stone, they aren't easily altered. First, many of these early experiences happen before language is fully developed. They are stored in memory as images, sensations and emotions. As a result, they may be out of conscious awareness and not easily examined with our adult logic and wisdom.

Second, these early experiences create a lens through which we continue to perceive and make sense of experiences. Since Charles, for example, expects that others will be neglectful or cruel, it's hard for him to see when they are actually being warm or engaging, or to trust that this can be how

Free Parenting Resource

The first year of your baby's life is tremendously exciting, and sometimes confusing (and perhaps a bit frightening too). This set of booklets, The Magic of Everyday Moments, from Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute and Zero To Three ® is warm, reassuring and helpful. Divided into 0-4 months, 4-6 months, 6-9 months, 9-12 months, and 12-15 months, each describes what the age is like for you as the parent, what you can expect from your youngster, what your baby is learning from you, what baby's cues are telling you, and more.

The sections entitled If Your Baby Could Talk are particularly helpful. Babies are not great conversationalists and it's hard to know what's going through their minds.

The set of booklets is available free by calling Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute at their toll-free number: 1 877 565-5465

some people behave. In fact, Charles may not even want to believe that people could be any way other than neglectful or cruel. That would mean that he would have to change the way he responded to people. Even more difficult, because his actions had been based on his understanding, he would also have to admit that he had been wrong in his conclusions. It's easier to tenaciously hold onto these familiar, if uncomfortable, ways of perceiving and responding to those around him.

Change is Possible

Clearly, our experiences as children powerfully influence our own parenting. But through a reflective process we can decide what we might want to keep from those experiences and we want to do differently.

First, think back to what it felt like to be a child in your family. Recognize that your own parents did what they could, given their own childhood and circumstances. The mother that hovered constantly, or the father that wanted to toughen you up, both wanted to protect you from a world they may have experienced as unsafe. The parents who criticized you too often and praised you too rarely may have worried about your success in a demanding world.

Identify the attitudes, values, and family experiences that you feel helped you grow and develop in a positive direction. They may be values about how you treat others, the importance of education, or spending time together as a family. Think about how you will make these part of your own parenting and family life.

Then think about others in your life who also had a positive impact – a teacher, grandparent, aunt or uncle, older sibling, family friend, a friend's parent. What did these significant figures in your life give you that helped you grow and develop? Did they see something in you that no one else did – intelligence, perseverance, special talents? Did they give you the feeling that they truly enjoyed being with you and were genuinely interested in what you were doing, what you felt, what you thought? How would you use these experiences as models for your own parenting?

Second, observe, observe, observe -- on the playground, in the grocery store, in play group. How do other parents and caregivers interact with their children? And, just as importantly, how do the children respond? Are these interactions similar to or different from what you experienced as a child? If you want to imitate these behaviors but they are different from your childhood, imagine what it would be like as a child to be treated in the manner you observed. Try to remember exactly what that parent did – what attitude that parent seemed to have, and the feelings conveyed with the actions. Allow it fully into your thoughts and feelings. Let it sink into your mind a bit.

Now, make a conscious decision that in a similar situation that's the way you will respond. Imagine what your child might actually do. Visualize being in that interaction. What you would say and do? What feelings do you want to have? You may have to fake the feelings at first, but that's okay. It will become more and more natural with practice.

Think of a phrase that will trigger your new set of behaviors. For example, when you imagine your child with that defiant look in his eyes that would normally send you into a ballistic rage imagine saying to yourself, "This is a power struggle. Don't take it personally." Then calmly take action to de-escalate the power struggle.

If your 5-year-old daughter walks into the room with her CD player turned up to a deafening volume, your impulse may be to yell at her to turn it off. Or, you might go over and turn it off yourself, thinking, "How dare she treat me so disrespectfully."

Anyone might be annoyed at such behavior from a child, but if an old issue from your childhood is respect for adults, then it may trigger an especially strong reaction.

Instead of lashing out, another possible response is to stop and think about the purpose of her behavior. Does she want your attention? Is there another way to give it to her while guiding her into more appropriate actions? Perhaps you can calmly walk over and crouch down right in front of her, taking her hands in yours. You ask if she would like to come to the table and sit with the rest of the family, have some dessert, and talk about the day.

Maybe she softens and says, "yes."

Perhaps you then say, "But I'm not going to be able to hear you since the music is so loud." She says, "That's okay, I'll shout." You say, "How about if you turn it down low so I can hear you." She says

"okay," turns the music off, and comes to the table ready to participate with the rest of the family.

By reflecting on your own childhood, you may also be able to identify areas of parenting that trigger particular difficulties for you. When you are devastated by your child's problems learning her numbers or her ABCs, these feelings may be connected to being criticized by your own parents. Or they might be related to your desire to prove that you are a successful parent by producing a bright, achieving child.

When you panic at your child's anger, the panic may be connected to feeling rejected by your own parents and your unfounded fear that your youngster is also rejecting you.

This is not to say that all strong reactions to our children's behaviors have to do with our own experiences as children. But a connection between the two is possible, and being able to understand it will provide needed perspective. Doing additional reading may also illuminate family patterns that influence your current parenting.

Finally, since many of the influences on our parenting are outside of our awareness, the help of a good therapist or parenting consultant is often valuable. Examining a current difficulty in the light of past family dynamics and interactions can be extremely helpful. It can help you figure out why a desired parenting strategy is difficult to implement or even understanding why a child behaves the way he does and what to do about it.

One of the many reasons we have children is to re-experience childhood through the eyes of our own children. Let's repeat the growth-enhancing experiences and avoid the mistakes from the past.

Martha Edwards, Ph.D. is a family therapist in private practice and faculty member at the Ackerman Institute for the Family in New York City, N.Y.

Parenting Thoughts to Grow On

Learning from the Challenges

As parents know all too well, there are times with your child when everything comes together and flows easily -- and times when things don't go as smoothly. Yet it is often from the challenging times, such as tantrums in the grocery store, power struggles during dressing, or resistance to going to new places, that you can learn the most about what works, what doesn't, and how you can make changes that will positively influence your child's life and your relationship.

In order to make the most of every day, here are some questions to ask yourself when you feel frustrated, angry, hurt, confused, or generally distressed by your child's behavior:

- What is my child trying to "tell" me? (Is his tantrum a signal that he is overwhelmed by the crowds and noise, that he's tired and/or hungry, or that he's upset by a transition?)
- Is her behavior an effort to cope with a difficult or distressing situation or feeling? (is she pushing or biting friends to protect herself from feeling that they are invading her space?)
- What is it about this behavior that makes me react so strongly and/or negatively? Does it remind me of something about myself or someone else (parent, brother, sister, uncle, aunt) I don't like? How does it make me feel about myself as a parent?
- How do my reactions to these behaviors affect my child? Are there responses that seem to work better than others? Why?

Understanding why things go well can help you figure out what you can do to set the stage for more positive interactions. Think about an enjoyable time with your child. Try to figure out what happened on the one morning that dressing became a shared, creative endeavor or on the day that grocery shopping turned into a fun way to learn about colors and counting.

- What made this experience so enjoyable for you?
- What made this experience so enjoyable for your child? How do you know?
- What were the circumstances that you think made this a positive experience? How can you recreate this more often?

Promoting Your Child's Healthy Development Day by Day

Parenthood is a challenging and exhilarating adventure. It requires more physical, mental, and emotional energy than, perhaps, any other journey you will undertake. What is crucial to remember is that you already do so much to support your child's development as you lovingly care for her every day. So remember to have fun! Share and delight in your child's discoveries. Go on outdoor explorations. Talk about what you are doing together. Cuddle with lots of good books. Set aside some quiet time for reading aloud to your child every day. Share music and dance together. Watch and listen to her. Try to see the world through her eyes in order to understand her interests as well as her frustrations. And love your little one as much as you can; some days may seem long, but the years are short!

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Dear Reader

When I was growing up both my parents had bad tempers. Naturally I vowed that my son would never fear my temper. On the other hand, I also grew up knowing my parents would walk through fire for me and thought I could accomplish just about anything in the world. I also wanted to pass that unconditional love and confidence on to my son.

Of course, I'm not the only one who has done this. As a child Al was smacked across the face almost every day. Her vow was that she would never raise a hand to her children and she hasn't. Louise was the oldest of a large brood. The demands of parenting so overwhelmed her mother that none of the children received much time or attention. They all raised one another, and went on to have small families.

Every parent has at some point looked around and thought, with either fear or satisfaction, "I'm just like my parents." The reason? Our parents give us the most enduring lessons on how to raise children. This month Martha Edwards, Ph.D. returns to talk about the lessons we learn from our parents, and how to keep the good stuff and jetison some of the not-so-good. This article will change the way you view parenting.

It's summer, and Dawn Barhyte has inventive and wonderful craft projects. There's also water safety information, book reviews and more.

Happy Father's Day !

Heide Schwartzberg

Something Special for Parents

Infants, Toddlers, and Families: A framework for support and intervention by Martha Farrell Erickson, PhD and Karen Kurz-Riemer, MEd, Guilford Press; New York, 1999 hardcover.

Some books are heavy on theory and research leaving the reader trying to decide what to do with the information. Other books are filled with concrete ideas but leave the reader wondering if these suggestions have any kind of solid foundation. And then, there are the few books that combine research and theory to create a framework for practical parenting interventions. This is one of those rare books that should be on the bookshelves of professionals who work with parents of young children.

Although the documentation can become a bit tedious after a while, Erickson and Kurz-Riemer use research to educate the reader on crucial aspects of early child development. For example, when they discuss attachment, they talk about what it is, how it develops, and why it makes a difference. Then, the authors go further to outline ways to strengthen parents skills in this area. One technique they describe is to video-tape infant-parent interactions, and how to use this as a guide to promote parental sensitivity to their child's cues and behavior.

Baby Basics

Differing Parenting Styles a Plus: Fathers Play Important Role

Research shows that today's first time fathers are more involved than past generations -- spending almost double the time with their children than their fathers did.

Studies found new fathers spend an average of three to five hours a day with their babies. This interaction between dad and his baby promotes healthy, stable development for the child, emotionally fulfills dad and provides needed support for mom.

Moms tend to be softer, quieter and more into words. Dads often seem to be the ones who push the stroller faster, give more "horsey rides" and make the bigger splash in the bathtub. Infants usually respond to dad's attention with obvious enjoyment, an emotional behavior that strengthens the bond between them. Because this kind of parenting is rewarding, many fathers say play is their favorite part of parenting.

Fathers also have a remarkable sensitivity and awareness of their infants' emotional and physical needs. Researchers discovered that dads respond just like moms to crying or smiling, and a father can tell when his baby needs to be burped, comforted, or has had enough to eat. And when they speak to their babies, fathers instinctively use a high pitched, more musical voice that their babies seem to prefer.

Finding time to spend with their baby is tough for many fathers but involved dads know the benefits are endless. Following are a few ways to create fulfilling moments with your new baby:

- Play, sing and talk!
- Rock your baby to sleep.
- Take over bathtime.
- Read books.
- Give your baby a massage.

Every time you interact with your baby, you trigger electrical pathways in her brain that help her learn. Parents' warmth and attention have a powerful influence on a baby's emotional, physical and intellectual development.

For a free educational booklet on baby's emotions call 1-877-JNJ-LINK or visit the web site www.jnjPediatricInstitute.com

Dr. Kyle Pruett is a professor of psychiatry at Yale University and presented research on the role of the father at the Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute scientific roundtable on early emotional development

Summer Books and Other Stuff

Make a Grasshead

Cut 6" from the foot of an old nylon stocking or pantyhose. Pour a few tablespoons of grass seed into the toe. Add sawdust or peat moss (instead of brains). Tie off the opening with a strip of nylon. Then turn the head over so the seeds are on top. Form a nose by pulling a little filling away from the rest of the head. Tie the nose shape with a piece of nylon.

Place the grass head on a saucer and water the seeds daily until they sprout. Keep the grass head moist and give it a haircut when its hair is long. And ... ➹➹

For more windowsill gardening ideas try: ***Windowsill Gardening: Year-Round Indoor Gardening Projects for Kids***, Klutz Press, Palo Alto, CA,www.klutz.com (pamphlet)

Summer Walks

Summer is also a perfect time to walk in the park, sit in the yard, go into the mountains (you get the idea) and look at the birds. Klutz Press also offers an easy-to-carry guide to over 20 common North American birds with a couple of short paragraphs describing its diet and habits.

Summer Poems

We got this summer fun idea from a book by Steven Schnur. Take a summer word and write each letter on its own line. Now, using that as the first letter create a verse. Here's one from Schnur's book:

Blankets and umbrellas,
Endless miles of sand,
And the
Constant
Hum of wind and waves.

The book itself features colorful and dramatic illustrations of these clever verses. If you liked his previous books (and we did) this one will also make you smile. ***Summer: An alphabet acrostic*** by Steven Schnur; illustrated by Leslie Evans, Clarion Books; New York, 2001; hardcover $15.00.

Pressed Flowers and Leaves

This is an oldie but still a goodie. While on a walk, have your child collect pretty flowers or leaves found along the way. When you get home, press the flowers between the pages of a large, heavy book. After about two weeks, maybe on a rainy, summer afternoon, take out the pressed flowers and leaves and have you child glue them onto a sheet of colored paper, arranging them in a pretty design. Cover the sheet with clear, plastic kitchen wrap.

Swimming and Safety Guidlines for Kids and Parents

Before you can say "Whew! It's hot out today!" it'll be time to take a dip. Families will be heading to beaches, lakes, and swimming pools. The American Red Cross says that, before you leave home, parents should be aware of the special guidelines for water safety.

The best way to learn about water safety is for families to take a Red Cross water safety or lifeguarding course. For more information on these kinds of courses contact your local Red Cross Chapter. They can give you information not only about water safety and swimming but also about basic first aid and CPR training that is available.

The American Red Cross also offers families the following guidelines:

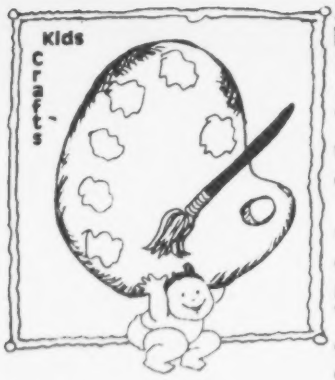
- Never swim alone. Swim only in supervised areas and always with a buddy.
- Know your swimming limits. Don't try to swim with a more experienced swimmer or encourage a weaker swimmer to keep up with you. Keep a watchful eye on children and weaker swimmers; if they appear tired, help them to leave the water and rest on land.
- Never drink alcohol and swim. Alcohol impairs your balance, judgement, swimming and diving skills, and reduces your body's ability to keep warm.
- Do not eat or chew gum while you swim - this is a major choking hazard.
- After a large meal, allow time for digestion to begin before you start any strenuous activity.
- Watch out for signs that could signal problems: too tired, too cold, too warm, too far from shore, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Don't go in the water when overheated. Allow time for your body to cool down and drink lots of liquids while cooling down.
- Always use Coast Guard approved life jackets when boating or fishing.
- Obey all posted warning signs such as "no diving" or "no swimming".
- If you see an emergency, check the scene to make sure it's safe and you can give a precise location; check the victim; call 911 immediately; care for the person until help arrives.

➢ ➢ ➢ **Especially for kids:**

- Maintain constant supervision. At no time should any child be left unattended in or around a water environment - no matter how good a swimmer your child is - no matter how shallow the water is.
- Don't leave toys in the water; they can lure a child back to the water when a parent isn't there.
- Don't rely on flotation devices or inflatable toys; every child must be supervised. Such devices can suddenly shift, deflate, or slip out from under a child.
- Children must constantly be reminded to walk slowly in a pool area and only enter the water when given permission. Encourage safe practices but don't assume good judgement on a child's part.
- Enroll your child in water safety courses in order to provide him with an early, safe aquatic experience. Be sure that the swim instructor is American Red Cross certified.

Swimming lessons are a gift that will have infinite rewards throughout a child's lifetime. Just be sure that your child begins safely and remains safe and summer will be the lovely, slow, delicious season it should be.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour



Kids Crafts

Summer is a super time to let your children unleash their creativity. Kids really revel in crafting any time of the year but when school is out and they have spare time on their hands they might look to you for projects.

Welcome summer with an assortment of summer crafts that will spark imaginations and delight. Let your children dig into a new project. Encourage them as they trail blaze new ground. Preschoolers will love to make these kid friendly projects. Allow your children's initiative to shine through. You don't have to be so determined to follow the directions that your children can't make a few detours along the way. So, join the fun and start crafting today.

Sand Treasures

Have you ever been to the beach and watched as your child spent hours creating a sculpture only to see it washed away? Now you can make a sand treasure that can be preserved and enjoyed indefinitely.

▪ You will need:
3 cups of sand (from the beach or craft store); 1-1/2 cups of cornstarch; 1-1/2 cups of water; 1 Tablespoon cream of tartar; Newspaper; Old cooking pot

First, together with your child, measure out the ingredients and mix them in the old pot. Then cook the mixture over a low heat stirring constantly. When it thickens take it off the stove and allow to cool. Once cool use a spoon to turn it out on the newspaper. Now let your child's creative spirit soar while forming the mixture into any shape imaginable. Let the sculpture dry overnight. The results will be a sand sculpture that can be cherished forever.

Bubble Blowing Bash

What child doesn't like to blow bubbles? This delightful activity combines the love of bubbles with paint for a unique painting.
You will need:
Tempera paints; 2 tablespoons of liquid dish detergent soap; 1/2 cup of water; Straws

First stir 1-2 tablespoons of the tempera paint with the water and dish soap. Have your child place one end of the straw in the mixture and gently blow bubbles. Then place a piece of white construction paper over the tray of mixture and hold in place until several of the bubbles have popped and thereby "magically" transferring their pattern onto the paper. Continue the process with different colored mixtures and your child will have a colorful bubble print. Add drawings to the print or outline the bubbles to highlight the shapes.

You Are My Sunshine

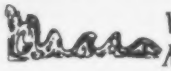
Summer is a time of bright, warm sunshine. Why not recreate it to keep for those Winter days?
You will need:
Glue; Paper plate; Yellow tissue paper; Yellow, orange crepe paper.

First have your child tear up the tissue paper giving those little fingers a workout. Then glue the tear-ups to the plate in any design. Finally add streamers of yellow and orange with the crepe paper.

Fantastic Fire Works

Summer means lots of fun things including the Fourth of July. Let your children visualize and create their own fireworks with this project.
You will need:
Red, blue, silver, gold glitter; Glue; Paintbrush; Blue or black construction paper.

Have your children paint designs with the glue, gently directing them to make starburst designs. As they are doing so talk about Independence Day and what the celebration actually means. Then let them have fun with the glitter sprinkling it onto the designs before the glue dries. Finally shake off the excess glitter and display these dazzling designs, in the sunlight, throughout the summer.



Wave Maker

Let your child make some waves with this activity.
You will need:
Clear 2-liter plastic bottle; Blue food coloring; Vegetable oil; Water; Glitter, metallic confetti; Small funnel.

Fill the bottle halfway with the water and add a few drops of the food coloring. Then have your child add the glitter a few pinches at a time. Using the funnel fill the rest of the bottle with the vegetable oil. Add a dab of glue on the cap and seal. Place some colored tape around seal for additional protection. Have your child tilt and rock slowly and marvel at the waters mesmerizing action.

Sand Squiggles

These sand sculptures will enchant your children as they watch their designs take shape and become solid.
You will need:
Wax paper; Sand; Glue.

Lay a large sheet of wax paper out on a flat surface. Encourage your children to be inventive and making odd and wonderful designs and squiggles using the glue straight from the bottle. Then have the children sprinkle the sand over the glue. Let dry for a few hours. Upon drying carefully peel the sand squiggles from the wax paper. These 3D designs really turn out neat.

Dawn Marie Barbyte

Library Resources

Bedtime

Books to enjoy with your youngster

📖 ***10 Minutes till Bedtime*** by Peggy Rathmann; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York, 1998; Hardcover, $16.99. A charming and whimsical book about a little boy whose father announces "10 minutes till Bedtime." This starts a big parade of tiny hamsters who tour the house as the leader (riding a hamster activity wheel) counts off the minutes and the boy readies himself for bed.

📖 ***The Boy Who Wouldn't Go to Bed*** by Helen Cooper; Puffin Books; New York, 2000; Softcover $5.99. His mother tells him it's bedtime but the summer sky is still light and the little boy doesn't want to go to bed. So, off he goes in his imagination to a playland filled with toys. But the toys become sleepy and the little boy is left alone, until his mother comes and tucks him into bed.

📖 ***Clara Ann Cookie, Go to Bed!*** by Harriet Ziefert; illustrated by Emily Bolam; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 2000; Hardcover, $15.00. Clara Ann Cookie does not go willingly to bed. In fact, she throws foot-stamping, face-reddening temper tantrums. When her mother shuts the door to her room, Clara Ann turns on her stuffed animals. All but Teddy go to sleep. Teddy won't go to bed. Finally, feeling badly about the way she treated Teddy, she sings to him and lies down next to him. They both fall asleep.

📖 ***Froggy Goes to Bed*** by Jonathan London; illustrated by Frank Remkiewicz, Viking; New York, 2000; Hardcover, $15.99. But he has to find his boat before he can take his bath, locate his toothbrush before he can brush his teeth. And so it goes throughout his bedtime routine.

📖 ***Pajama Time!*** by Sandra Boynton, Workman Publishing; New York, 2000; Board book $6.95. You and your youngster will be singing along with the bee-bop words of this book. "They might be stripey, or polka dot. But we can all pajammy in whatever we've got. It's Pajama Time!"

📖 ***When I'm Sleepy*** by Jane R. Howard; illustrated by Lynne Cherry; Puffin Books; New York, 2000; Softcover $5.99. A great quieting-down book about a little girl who wonders what it would be like to sleep like the animals. She imagines herself in a downy nest, in a cozy cave entwined with a bear, but finally she's glad to sleep in her own bed with her warm blanket and soft pillow.

Parent-Child Conflict

📖 ***Christina Katerina and the Time She Quit the Family*** by Patricia Lee Gauch; illustrated by Elise Primavera; PaperStar Books; New York, 1999; Softcover, $5.99. Christina wants to quit the family. Her brother and his friends trashed her room. Her father came in and yelled. Her mother reminded her that she's a member of the family and can't just do as she pleases. So Christina decides to become Agnes and live as she pleases. Her mother, with good humor and a flexible attitude, lets her try it. The situation didn't work out as well as Christina expected.

📖 ***Clara Ann Cookie*** by Harriet Ziefert; illustrated by Emily Bolam; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover $15.00. In this book Clara Ann has to get up and get dressed, and she doesn't want to do that. It's a real struggle of wills and then Clara starts to cry. Her resourceful mother comes up with a face-making game that distracts Clara and turns getting dressed into fun.

📖 ***D.W., Go to Your Room!*** by Marc Brown; Little, Brown and Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover, $13.95. D.W. is playing but the baby seems to be getting in the way. When she makes the baby cry, D.W. gets sent to her room, where she feels very sorry for herself. It's the baby whose smiles make her feel better.

📖 ***Otto's Rainy Day*** by Natasha Yim; illustrated by Pamela R. Levy; Talewinds (Charlesbridge); Watertown, MA, 2000; Hardcover $15.95. It was Otto's favorite, a rainy day. But his mother has too much work to do and won't let him go outside. Otto gets into one piece of mischief after another. Finally he tries to bake her a chocolate cake and ends up with batter all over. Otto began to cry. "I just wanted to play in the rain." What does mom do? Although her patience is sorely tested, she understands that sometimes being with her son is more important than doing work.

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Lecciones Sobre ser Padres:

Aprendiendo a ser Padre de Nuestros Propios Padres

De vez en cuando escuchamos a alguien decir que las personas debieran tomar una clase donde aprendan a ser padres. En realidad, ya todos nosotros hemos asistido a esta clase –formándonos en nuestras propias familias. Mucho de lo que aprendemos sobre ser padres proviene de nuestras experiencias de como fuimos criados.

Frecuentemente las lecciones son obvias. Aprendemos observando los que hacen nuestros padres y usándolos como modelo –ya sea un modelo positivo que queremos aplicar y emular o un modelo negativo que queremos evitar.

Otras lecciones son menos obvias. Son creadas por la manera que nos tratan nuestros padres y forman una percepción de nosotros y de nuestro mundo. Estas lecciones más sutiles también forman nuestras percepciones y guían nuestras acciones.

Recreando lo Positivo

Todos queremos recrear las experiencias positivas que tuvimos en nuestra infancia. Los relatos en la noche, los juegos durante la hora del baño, las cenas durante los días festivos. Aprendemos de nuestros padres y le pasamos estas lecciones a nuestros propios niños.

Por ejemplo, Miranda se crió en una familia muy unida donde los niños ayudaban con todas las tareas domésticas. Aunque no siempre estaba muy feliz haciendo tareas domésticas los sábados por la mañana, al recordarlas sabe que aprendió mucho de esa experiencia sobre el trabajo en equipo, cooperación y responsabilidad. También recuerda los sentimientos de orgullo y provecho cuando sus padres aprobaban de sus esfuerzos. Ahora que ella es madre, y a pesar de las ocasionales protestas de sus hijos, ella ha mantenido el día de tareas domésticas como una parte de la rutina semanal hogareña. Ella quiere traspasar estos valores que aprendió a sus propios hijos.

Evite lo Negativo

Los padres también pueden usar sus experiencias negativas de la infancia como una especie de anti modelo. En vez de recrear estas experiencias, debemos mantenerla en mente para

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evitar repetir los errores de nuestros padres. La gente puede que recuerde la dura disciplina de hace una o dos generaciones y jurar que nunca harán lo mismo con sus propios hijos.

A veces, en un intento de evitar los errores de nuestros padres, nos pasamos al otro extremo. Un padre que fue privado emocional y materialmente cuando era niño le da todo lo que él no tuvo y más, a su hija. El resultado es que su hija se está formando consentida y llena de exigencias. Y no está aprendiendo a dar su parte para sustentar y mantener relaciones con otros.

Una madre que recuerda a sus padres como fríos y perfeccionistas no quiere que sus hijos sientan esa sensación de distanciamiento que ella percibía de sus padres. No puede soportar cuando sus niños hacen muecas de desagrado o se van de la pieza cuando trata de corregir su conducta, por lo tanto no ha podido fijar limites claros para sus dos hijos, especialmente cuando pelean. El resultado es que el hijo menor se siente desprotegido en cuanto a los ataques de su hermano. Reacciona poniéndose más violento. Las batallas entre los hermanos se exacerban.

Mensajes Silenciosos

Si las personas examinan su propia conducta, generalmente pueden ver como sus acciones son iguales o distintas a las acciones de sus padres. Pero las experiencias de la infancia también ejercen una influencia menos obvia. Ellas afectan nuestra comprensión sobre la manera en que operan las relaciones y crean una visión de quienes somos y que podemos esperar de la gente a nuestro alrededor.

Los padres que reaccionan a sus niños con rabia o molestia dan un mensaje distinto de los que reaccionan con amor y paciencia. Paulatinamente, a través del tiempo, los niños crean un "modelo interno de trabajo". Este modelo refleja la sensación del niño sobre si mismo, sobre otros, y estas relaciones. Por ejemplo: los otros serán accesibles o fríos. Unos aceptarán que "Está bien como soy" o "debo ser perfecto para que otros me puedan querer".

Los niños usan estos modelos para interpretar eventos o experiencias. Si un padre está gritando, qué quiere decir eso? Un padre que es generalmente cariñoso ha perdido el control temporalmente? O, el niño interpretará esto como otra prueba que es malo?

Estos modelos e interpretaciones también afectan las futuras interacciones del niño. Si Ud. alguna vez ha pensado "no empieces a hacer eso otra vez" cuando enfrentas a un niño impávido (o cuando te acuerdas de tu relación con tus padres) entonces Ud. sabe que nuestras experiencias pasadas afectan la manera en que interpretamos las acciones de otros y las acciones que adoptamos en anticipación.

Cuando estas experiencias del pasado son positivas, afectan nuestras relaciones presentes. Los padres de Roberto creían en equilibrar su amor y cariño con valores y límites claros. Su cariño y su afecto hacia él le entregó la sensación que él era básicamente bueno. Ellos le ayudaron a comprender las consecuencias de sus acciones y expresaban su clara molestia cuando su conducta sobrepasaba los valores de la familia. Él se crió confiando en que otros se relacionarían con él de una manera positiva, que le dirían si él hacía algo problemático y que también había una manera de resolver este problema. Como padre, él pudo desarrollar el mismo tipo de relaciones con sus propios hijos.

En comparación, Carlos se crió en una familia caótica, con muchos hermanos. Su atareada madre generalmente ignoraba a Carlos y a sus hermanos y hermanas. El más chico de la familia, era frecuentemente espantado por sus hermanos. Como resultado, creció sintiéndose sin poder y creyendo que no podía confiar en nadie que lo quisiera o apoyara. El caos y la violencia ocasional llevó a Carlos a temer que le gente podía fácilmente perder el control.

Su reacción, cuando se convirtió en padre, fue dar un fuerte sentido de orden y adoptar un modelo militar de la vida familiar. Sus hijos contestaban, "Si, señor" cuando les daba ordenes del "cuartel general". Él cuidadosamente inspeccionaba su trabajo y lo aprobaba digno de las normas familiares. Esto le daba una sensación de control y mantenía las cosas en orden. Era como un antídoto a sus sentimientos infantiles de insuficiencia, caos y terror.

Puede ser Difícil Cambiar

Las ideas de Carlos sobre el mundo fueron formadas tempranamente y no cambiaron a medida que se convirtió en adulto. A pesar de que estas ideas no son permanentes, tampoco son fáciles de cambiar. Primero, muchas de estas experiencias tempranas ocurren antes que el lenguaje esté completamente desarrollado. Están

almacenadas en la memoria como imágenes, sensaciones y emociones. El resultado es que estén más allá de la percepción conciente y no pueden ser fácilmente examinados con nuestra lógica y sabiduría de adultos.

Segundo, estas experiencias tempranas crean una óptica a través de la cual continuamos percibiendo y descifrando experiencias. Ya que Carlos, por ejemplo, tiene la expectativa que otros sean indiferentes o crueles, es difícil para él ver cuando las personas están realmente siendo cariñosas o interesadas, o confiar en que algunas personas en realidad se comporten de esta manera. De hecho, Carlos quizás no quiera creer que la gente puede ser de otra manera fuera de indiferentes o crueles. Eso querría decir que tendría que cambiar la manera en que él responde a las personas. Incluso es más difícil, ya que sus acciones están basadas en su percepción, él también tendría que admitir que estaba equivocado en sus conclusiones. Es más fácil aferrarse tenazmente a estas conocidas, aunque incomodas, maneras de percibir y reaccionar a la gente que lo rodea.

El Cambio es Posible

Claramente, nuestras experiencias de niño influencian fuertemente nuestro propio estilo de ser padres. Pero a través de un proceso de reflexión podemos decidir que queremos mantener de esas experiencias y que queremos hacer diferente.

Primero, recuerde que sintió cuando era niño en su familia. Reconozca que sus padres hicieron lo que pudieron, dada sus propias infancias y circunstancias. La madre que siempre estaba, o el padre que trataba de convertirte en una persona más dura. Ambos querían protegerte de un mundo que quizás ellos experimentaron como peligroso. Los padres que te criticaron demasiado frecuentemente y que te felicitaron muy pocas veces estaban preocupados de tu éxito en un mundo lleno de exigencias.

Identifique las actitudes, valores, y las experiencias familiares que crees que te ayudaron a madurar y a desarrollarte en una dirección positiva. Pueden ser valores sobre como tratas a otros, la importancia de la educación, o disfrutar el tiempo junto con la familia. Piensa sobre como harás esto parte de tu propia experiencia como padre y vida familiar.

Piensa sobre otras personas en tu vida que también han tenido un impacto positivo –un maestro, abuelo, tía o tío, hermano mayor, amigo de la familia, o un amigo de tus padres. Qué te dieron estos personajes importantes de tu vida que te ayudaron a madurar y desarrollarte? Vieron algo en ti que ninguna otra persona vio –inteligencia, perseverancia, talentos especiales? Te dieron la sensación que verdaderamente gozaban estando contigo y estaban genuinamente interesados en lo que hacías, lo que sentías, lo que pensabas? Cómo usarías estas experiencias como modelos para tu propia manera de ser padre?

Segundo, observa, observa, observa –en los parques, en el supermercado, en los grupos de juego. Cómo interaccionan otros padres y apoderados con sus niños? E, igualmente importante, cómo responden los niños? Estas interacciones son parecidas o distintas a las que tú experimentaste como niño? Si tú quieres imitar estas conductas pero que son distintas a las de tú infancia, imagínate como sería ser niño y ser tratado de la manera que observaste. Trata de recordar exactamente qué fue lo que hizo ese padre –qué actitud parecía tener ese padre y los sentimientos expresados con esas acciones. Permite que penetre completamente tus pensamientos y sentimientos. Déjalo que madure un poco en tu mente.

Bien, haz una decisión consciente que en una situación similar esa es la manera en que responderás. Imagínate qué es lo que realmente haría tú niño. Visualiza estar en esa interacción. Qué harías y dirías tú.? Qué sentimientos quieres tener? Quizás tendrás que fingir esos sentimientos al principio, pero no te preocupes. Será más y más natural con la práctica.

Imagínate una frase que desencadene un nuevo conjunto de sentimientos. Por ejemplo, cuando te

imaginas a tú niño con esa mirada desafiante en sus ojos que normalmente te enardecería, imagínate diciéndote a ti mismo, "Esta es una lucha por el poder. No es personal". Entonces adopta acciones para bajarle el perfil a la lucha por el poder.

Si tú hija de cinco años entra a la habitación con su equipo de música con un volumen ensordecedor, tú impulso puede ser gritarle que lo apague. O, puedes ir donde ella y apagarlo personalmente, pensando, "Cómo se atreve a ser tan irrespetuosa conmigo".

Cualquier persona puede molestarse con ese tipo de conducta de un niño, pero si un viejo tema de tu infancia es el respeto por los adultos, esto podría desencadenara una reacción especialmente fuerte.

En vez de enojarte, otra respuesta posible es detenerse y pensar sobre el objetivo de su conducta. Está buscando atención? Hay alguna otra manera de dársela y al mismo tiempo encaminarla a acciones más apropiadas? Quizás puedes caminar hacia ella con calma y agacharte al frente de ella, tomado sus manos. Le preguntas si le gustaría venir a sentarse a la mesa con el resto de la familia, comer postre, y conversar sobre el día.

Quizás ella acepta y dice "Si"

Entonces quizás dices, "pero no voy a poder escucharte ya que la música está muy fuerte". Ella contesta, "Está bien, puedo gritar". Tú dices "Qué si tu bajas la música para que pueda escucharte. Ella dice "bien", apaga la música y viene a la mesa a relacionarse con el resto de la familia.

Al reflexionar sobre tú propia infancia, quizás también puedas identificar áreas de ser padre que desencadenan dificultades especiales. Cuando tú estás abrumado por los problemas de tu niño en aprender números o el alfabeto, estos sentimientos pueden estar relacionados a las criticas de tus propios padres. O pueden estar relacionados a tu deseo de probar que eres un padre exitoso por haber producido un niño inteligente y productivo.

Cuando te asustas con la rabia de tu hijo, ese miedo puede estar relacionado a sentirse rechazado por tus propios padres y tú miedo infundado que tu niño también te está rechazando.

Esto no quiere decir que todas las reacciones fuertes a las conductas de nuestro niños tienen que ver con nuestras propias experiencias como niños. Pero una relación entre ambas es posible y poder comprenderla dará la perspectiva necesaria. Lecturas adicionales también pueden iluminar patrones familiares que influencian tú estilo de ser padre.

Finalmente, ya que muchas de las influencias sobre nuestra manera de ser padre están en el inconsciente, la ayuda de un buen terapeuta y consultor familiar es frecuentemente útil. Examinar una dificultad actual a la luz de dinámicas e interacciones familiares del pasado puede ser muy útil. Lo puede ayudar a descifrar por qué una estrategia de ser padre deseada es difícil de implementar o incluso entender por qué un niño se porta de esa manera y que se puede hacer.

Una de las muchas razones que tenemos niños es para revivir la infancia a través de los ojos de nuestros propios niños. Repitamos las experiencias que nos hacen crecer y evitemos los errores del pasado.

Martha Edwards, Ph.D. es terapeuta familiar con una practica privada y profesora en el Ackerman Institute for the Family en Nueva York.

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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When Kids Want A Pet

How Much Is That Kimodo Dragon in the Window?

It's a peaceful afternoon. You step into your child's room. In the quiet solitude you hear a "ribet" sound coming from somewhere. After you pick your startled self up from the floor, you scream "Sabrinaaaa!!!" and your child comes running. "It's just a frog mom..." she says with disdain. And, before you know what has happened, you've adopted another pet!

People and animals - an age old connection that is as strong today as it was when the first caveman discovered he could keep warm by holding a fuzzy, little creature near his chest. Animals are still a very important part of the lives and thoughts of millions of human beings the world over. Perhaps the fact that they are living creatures is one of the most important connections between ourselves and our animal companions. There is something incredibly comforting about a purring kitten asleep in a circle on your lap or the soulful brown eyes of a puppy as he looks up at you some sunny Sunday morning.

Over the years, a wide array of creatures have resided at our house. From dogs and cats to finches, parakeets, fish, turtles, snails, hamsters, rats, and gerbils, we've loved them all and cared for them all. Animals are delightful enhancements to our lives. But, there are several important things to consider before making a decision about getting a pet.

What Is It About Pets?

Feelings of Mastery

Caring for pets can provide children with feelings of competence and mastery. This sense of accomplishment helps them find a meaningful place in their world and teaches children on many levels. First they must learn how to actually do the things that are part of pet care. Carefully pouring food, washing water bowls, and brushing an animal's fur are all learning skills, and doing them well goes far towards building self confidence.

With a parent's help, children can also benefit educationally from having a pet. Many facts of science and nature are learned as a natural extension of pet ownership and enrich a child's life in ways we cannot even imagine.

Laila was a naturally curious child, living in a rural area. When her mother brought home a baby chicken, she was delighted. As an only child, she experienced the chick almost as though it was a sibling. Soon, however, the questions began. Her curious mind wanted to know everything about the chick and this provided a wonderful opening into science and the environment. Every Saturday, she and her mom would make a trip to the public library where they found books and videos on chickens, birds, and other flying creatures, both domestic and wild. "Soon Laila was telling everyone what she had learned about her chicken. She became the family 'expert' and the interest then expanded to other animals. She lives

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in a very rich world because that chicken opened an entire universe of knowledge to her," says her mother, Monir.

✿ *Emotional Growth*

Sandra Whiteside, CSW, is the Director of the Turnabout Family-Based Foster Treatment Program for North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center and a psychiatric social worker who has used pet therapy on a long, ongoing basis in her clinical practice. "Increasingly, our clinical experience is confirming what people have always known - being with a loving pet is healing on all levels," she says.

Unconditional love can help improve children's self-esteem and build their confidence. The idea of not being judged, but simply accepted because you exist is amazingly seductive to everyone of us not only children. Children respond to unconditional love with unconditional love. A relationship of this kind with a pet is much less complicated than those they might have with family and friends. A simple, "pure" affection with a pet can give children the confidence to seek out relationships they might never have chanced before.

"We use animals in our work with children and teens with emotional disturbances. Children learn the importance of being gentle and responsive; they learn to 'read' the communication of animals and this helps them to improve their ability to read social cues in human interactions," says Whiteside.

"At first Robert was detached and so fearful of the dog that he wouldn't even look at it." she says. "But that changed. He was praised for touching her very briefly. Gradually Robert realized that he could slowly interact with the dog. Soon he was laughing as he threw balls to her. After about four weeks of work with the treatment dog, Robert, a very fragile child, was no longer afraid around her and was obviously proud of himself for mastering his fear," Ms. Whiteside recounts.

"Interaction with pets, aids in the formation of trusting, caring relationships with others. It facilitates the growth of compassion and empathy and provides a safe recipient for secrets and private thoughts" Ms. Whiteside says. "Children who are shy or withdrawn may find it easier to open up to an animal. A shy child walking with a friendly dog on a leash has a natural opening to socialize with other children. Kids just seem drawn to the dog and the shy child is then pulled in," she says.

"Michael seemed so anxious all of the time" mother Maxine reports. "When he was around three, my dad's dog had a litter of puppies and we adopted one. Michael took to Dusty immediately and soon they were constant companions. As the days and months passed, I began to notice that Michael seemed less anxious. Transition times were less stressful for all of us. Charlie and I just thought 'well Mike's starting to grow up.' We never knew the part that Dusty played. Then, one evening I happened to walk by Michael's door. He was laying on his back on the floor, his head on Dusty's belly. He was quietly talking to Dusty about his day at nursery school. Dusty lay there patiently, unmoving, as Michael discussed his day. It was then I realized just how important Dusty was to Michael."

Ms. Whiteside, who also volunteers her time working in a well-known local animal shelter, sums up the benefits of relationships with animals: "Pets provide lessons about life such as reproduction, birth, illnesses, accidents, death, and bereavement. They help develop responsible behavior and a sense of accountability for actions. Finally, they provide a child with a real connection to nature and the world around them while teaching respect for other living creatures."

Dog Bite Prevention

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says that 50 percent of all children in the United States will be bitten by a dog before their 12th birthday. Children should be taught, from a very early age, the appropriate way to behave around animals. The ASPCA offers the following guidelines for the prevention of dog bites:

1) Never stare directly into a dog's eyes.
2) Do not tease dogs that are behind fences.
3) Never approach dogs that are chained up in yards.
4) Never touch or approach an unleashed dog. Report unleashed dogs immediately to an adult.
5) Do not run or scream if an unleashed dog comes near. Stand very still and be very quiet.
6) Never touch or play with a dog that is eating or sleeping.
7) Ask permission of an owner before approaching any dog.
8) After receiving permission, quietly and calmly approach the dog by first letting him sniff your closed, outstretched hand.

➢ **For more information** on kids and pets contact the ASPCA; 424 East 92nd Street; New York, NY 10128-6804; (212) 876-7700; http://www..aspca.org

Let's Think About It

OK! So you're thinking about getting a pet. There is probably some sort of pet that is - appropriate for every family. The next step is to determine which pet is best for your family. A "good fit" is critical to successful pet ownership.

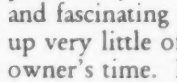
Both parents working? Then the answer might be a cat. Cats are pretty low maintenance and can get along for long periods on their own. According to the Humane Education Society, the cat pet population in America

has risen to 63.8 million compared to 55 million pet dogs. The most probable reason for the popularity of cats as pets probably has to do with the fact that they are more adaptable to the lifestyle of working people, although they certainly require care and attention.

A dog? Dogs don't have the reputation for being man's best friend for nothing. Dogs provide years of love and companionship but remember, dogs require a lot of work. Along with regular walking, bathing, and feeding, dogs require your presence as much as you enjoy theirs. They can become despondent and anxious when left alone for long periods. Large breeds need lots of room to run and romp. Many breeds like to chew and CHEW. So take in to account how much time family members will be able to spend with their dog before considering a dog.

Fish? Fish make wonderful pets. They are beautiful and fascinating and take up very little of their owner's time. Many doctors and dentists have tanks of fish in their waiting rooms. Watching aquarium fish seems to have a calming effect.

How about a bird? When you bring home a feathered friend you'll need a cage large enough for him to spread his wings, feeding and water dishes, perches, cuttle bones, mirror, gravel, and toys specifically designed for the type of bird you have. Birds, when well fed and cared for, can live long lives. The National Humane Education Society is a non-profit organization located in Leesburg Va. dedicated to fostering the sentiment of kindness to animals in children and adults. According to Elisabeth Guillet, Vk, Senior Humane Educator at the Society, parakeets and cockatiels can live up to eight to ten years while some large birds have been known to live up to fifty years!



Fuzzy four-legged friends? Tame hamsters, gerbils, and guinea pigs make appropriate pets for youngsters because they are inexpensive to feed and don't require as much care as larger animals. They are naturally clean, and when properly kept, are odorless. They are especially nice pets for those living in small houses or apartments.

Here are some things to think about when deciding on a pet:

- First, be sure. Every year millions of pets are adopted and then abandoned because families have not anticipated the amount of work a pet requires. Explore all of your options, consider all of the guidelines and information about your chosen pet, and then, and only then, make your decision.
- Do any family members have asthma or allergies? Then cats, dogs, and other mammals are probably out of the question. Ask your pediatrician to check your children for specific allergies before you actually go out and get your pet.
- How much time can you and your family spend on actual pet care? Children should be given specific chores, that are age appropriate, in caring for their pet. But remember, you as the parent, will probably be doing the lion's share of pet care and so you need to be realistic about how much actual time you have each day to devote to this aspect of your life.

In life, everything is timing. Do you have the time for walking a dog three or four times a day? Do you have the time for cleaning up after a spectacular, but very messy, parrot? How much time are you able to devote to training? How often will your pet need to have regular veterinarian visits? How much food, equipment, and grooming supplies will your pet need? Long, frequent trips to pet supply stores may just not fit into your schedule. Timing is everything - it's important to consider it.

- Do you live in a place where a pet can thrive? Many pets have an enormous range of requirements such as space, temperature, and light. Does your family live in an apartment in a city? Then a large dog that needs to have plenty of space to run is not the best choice for you. Would you like a tank full of rare tropical fish? Does your home have the space and capability to accommodate tanks, filters, and heaters?
- Consider the cost. Pets that require a lot of equipment and special medical care are expensive. Although an exotic pet might be appealing to you and your family, the cost may be prohibitive. Ms. Guillet says that exotic or wild pets such as monkeys, snakes, lizards, or rare species of birds are very expensive and rarely make good pets. It is important for potential owners to think twice about an exotic pet as they are difficult to care for, often requiring very

Pet Finding on the Web

When parents and kids set out to find a pet, they often end up at a pet shelter, pound, or Humane Society facility. Potential per owners can also go online to www.petfinder.com. This free service lists approximately 19,000 animals in over 1,300 shelters and rescue organizations. Pets can be searched in many categories such as species, breed, age, gender, size, and temperament. The results come back sorted by the facility that is closest, geographically, to the family's home. The list also offers photographs of the animals and users can double click on a given animal to get an in-depth profile of the animal's history, personality, and other pertinent information.

➢ The American Kennel Club also offers a national listing of Animal Rescue Shelters. Every year the AKC shelters rescue and offer for adoption millions of abandoned, abused, or unwanted dogs. Contact the AKC National Rescue Network at:

www.akc.org\breeds\rescue.csm

Then click on the breed of your choice

special physical environments and food. Be realistic about your budget and look towards the pet that will best fit into your financial picture. A special note here: pure breed pets are much more expensive to purchase and care for than mixed breeds.

• What are the ages of your children? Remember: very young children must never be left unsupervised around their pets - never. Young children can have pets as long as you teach them the rules, both for their and their pet's safety. Children must be made aware of their own strength and must be taught about the strength and mood of their pet.

If the Answer is "Yes"!

The North Shore Animal League - America, a leading animal shelter located in Port Washington, New York, recommends that children be brought to a reputable shelter, prior to an adoption, to look and learn about the needs and requirements of animals. Families can arrange for tours of these shelters. After the visit, sit down with your children and talk about what they've seen and about what they've learned. Discuss in realistic terms what is required if they decide to adopt a pet. Then if the decision is "yes" make a list of rules and chores that the child will be responsible for. As a long-time "pet" parent, the following rules come to mind:

(1) Teach children how to handle their pet safely. If they push, squeeze, or pull on their pet they are likely to be bitten or injured in some way. Make them understand that if they hurt their pet, the pet will defend itself and this is only fair. They need to understand that gentleness is paramount.

(2) Children should know that they should never bother their pet when it is eating, sleeping, or caring for their offspring. Also note that, when a pet is playing aggressively with a toy (such as a tug toy) children should be careful not to interrupt this play.

(3) Never - never - leave a very young child alone and unsupervised with a pet - it's too dangerous for both the pet and the child.

(4) No matter how nice a relationship a child has with his own family's pets, he must be taught that he can never approach a stray or unknown animal under any circumstances. Even if the animal is on a leash, a child should be taught to always speak with the owner before he gets near an unknown animal.

(5) Teach your children to always wash their hands thoroughly after handling any pet. Remember that pets such as turtles carry salmonella and other bacteria so these pets are never a good choice for very young children.

"I Want to Help!"

From years of observing my daughter and her friends and from information from Sandra Whiteside, we can see that there are certain chores children can do at each age level. These kinds of chores are just good sense and parents can probably think of others as well.

Chores that Kids Can Do:

➔ **Toddlers, With Supervision**:

a] Throw a toy or gently stroke their pet
b] Pour out dry food for mammals or seeds for birds
c] Sprinkle food for fish
d] Praise a pet for good behavior and offer a treat

➔ **Three to Five Year Olds, With Supervision**:

a] Wash, rinse, and fill the water bowl
b] Throw a ball for a dog to retrieve
c] Pull a toy for a cat to chase
d] Accompany a parent who is walking the dog
e] Watch and learn as a parent trains a pet
f] Help washing and cleaning a bird's cups, perches, and cage
h] Accompany and help a parent as they shop for pet food and supplies

What If You Just Can't Have A Pet?

Remember that kids can still have a chance to interact with animals even if having a pet in your home is just not a good choice at the present time. Contact your local animal shelters and inquire about volunteer opportunities for kids. There may also be environmental groups in your area that use volunteers in their endangered species programs. Contact your local municipal zoos and universities for more information on these opportunities. Some environmental websites to explore are:

- Defenders of Wildlife - www.defenders.org
- Environmental Defense Fund - www.edf.org
- Greenpeace - www.greenpeace.org
- International Fund for Animal Welfare - www.ifaw.org
- National Parks Conservation Association - www.npca.org
- National Wildlife Federation - www.nwf.org
- World Wildlife Fund - www.worldwildlife.org

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➔ **Six Years Old and Up, With Supervision:**
a] Take responsibility (with parental reminders) for feeding and watering
b] Brush and groom pets
c] Help in bathing pets
d] Feed the fish
e] Feed the birds
f] Clean cat's litter box with supervision
g] Change the shavings, wash, and dry a rodent's cage

Steps to Keep a Pet Safe, Healthy, and Content

The Humane Society of the United States, in its constant battle to end animal abuse, cruelty, and neglect, encourages pet owners to consider the following actions in support of animals - particularly dogs and cats:

✦ Please be sure that your pet wears an identification tag so that he can be returned to you if lost.

✦ To prevent destructive animal behavioral problems, enroll your new puppy immediately in behavioral training classes. Many area animal shelters run these kinds of classes on a continuing basis, free.

✦ Make sure your pet has a complete medical exam by a veterinarian at least once a year. Animal behavioral problems can be health related.

✦ Prepare for disasters. Make sure that you have a plan for your pet in the event of hurricane, tornado, fire, heavy snowfall, or flood.

✦ Learn how to avoid dog bites and attacks and learn how to prevent your own dog from biting. Contact your local Humane Society or ASPCA to find out where classes are offered in your community.

✦ Make sure that your pet is spayed or neutered. Millions of stray cats and dogs suffer each year from abuse, neglect, starvation, and disease.

✦ Avoid fad animals or spur-of-the-moment purchases. Take time to learn all about any pet you are considering for your family.

✦ Work only with reputable breeders, pet stores, or shelters to insure that your pet is healthy and has been raised in an humane environment. Ask your local Humane Society or veterinarian for referrals.

A Final Word

Pet ownership can be one of life's most pleasant and rewarding experiences for both your child and you. One parent put it this way, "My wife and I both work, so the care and upkeep of our three finches, two cats, and one gerbil take quite a bite out of our time. But the lessons our children have learned over the years, the joy we experience every time we see them playing together, the wonderful memories we have made, more that compensate us for the work." And so it goes ... either you are a pet person or you aren't. If you aren't, nothing that anyone can say will change that. But if you are, nothing is ever too much work or too difficult to compare with the unbridled exhilaration you experience when that fat, little puppy cuddles up next to you, yawns, and falls asleep, curled up in your arms.

When A Pet Dies

Children will be filled with questions when a pet dies. "Why did it happen? Was it my fault? Will I ever see my pet again?" are only a few of the questions that will come up in the days following a pet's death. Parents should answer each question simply, clearly, and honestly. If a pet is sick or dying, parents can spend some time talking about this and preparing a child for the inevitable. If possible, help you child say "good-bye" before a pet dies.

Remember that children mourn in ways we might not recognize. Not only will they be sad, they may also be angry, fearful or guilty when their pet dies. They may deny the fact. There is not one best method for a parent to help their children mourn. It may help to talk about the pet with friends and family but, ultimately, the mourning process must happen in children's own way and own time. Parents, however, can help, guide, and comfort. They can let their children know that it is normal and all right to miss their pet and feel the loss. Parents must just "be there" when they are needed, encouraging the child to share feelings and process their loss.

Very young children usually see death as something temporary that can be reversed. For this reason, they should be told very explicitly about their pet's death. While in a familiar setting, parents can hold the child in their arms and in a soothing voice gently explain that their pet has stopped moving, cannot see or hear anymore, and won't wake up again. A parent may have to repeat this more than once. It is extremely important for parents to be honest when talking to their children about death. Trying to protect a child, using euphemisms, and being vague or inaccurate can create anxiety, confusion, and mistrust.

➢ **For more information** contact the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP); P.O. Box # 96106; Washington, DC 20090. Ask for "Facts for Families ©"; # 8 *Children and Grief* and # 75 *Children and Pets.*

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour is a freelance writer and Public Information Officer at North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. A wife and mother, she has been a "pet person" all of her life.

Dear Reader

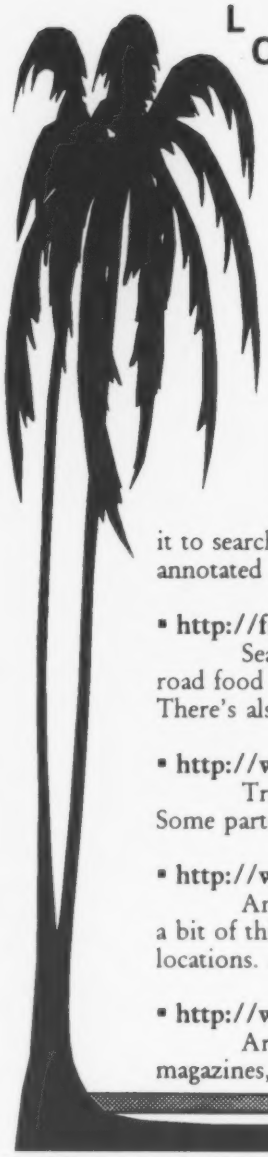
Pets and kids do seem to go together. Our family has been down that road having had turtles, birds, and now a dog. I'm actually more of a bird person. I love the cheerful chirping, a parakeet riding on my shoulder and even landing on top of my head. I also love curling up to watch television with Max the dog's head propped up on my knee. And then, there are the mornings I go in to my son's room and there are two heads side-by-side on the pillow – one covered with fur.

There is definitely something special about sharing one's home with other living creatures. But it is also a responsibility -- food, veterinarian bills, daily care, training. It's not a decision to be made lightly.

This month Jane Meckwood-Yazdpour discusses the benefits and responsibilities of pets, and things to take into consideration when choosing a pet. We've also got pets featured in Library Resources. Sandy Allen is back with summer soup recipes. Summer time can also mean vacation time with the kids. If your family is planning a trip, you might want to check out some of the family travel websites we found.

Since this is our combined July/August issue we'll be back in September. Have a great summer.

Heide Schwartzberg



LOOK *Family Travel Websites*

Our nonexhaustive roundup of websites to visit if you're planning a trip this summer. Most, if not all, of these sites have advertising, but someone does have to pay the bills for "free" information.

- **http://www.dmoz.org**

A directory service like Yahoo, only better. Their goal is to produce the most comprehensive directory of the web relying on volunteers who undertake to organize small areas of the vast internet. Unlike several other major directories, websites don't have to pay to have their site listed. Because it's a directory, ask it to search for **children travel** and **family travel** and enjoy the annotated listing of sites.

- **http://familytravelguides.com**

Search for family friendly resorts and hotels, look for road food recipes, read up on travel tips (including safety issues). There's also a family adventure travel section.

- **http://www.familytravelforum.com**

Travel news and travel deals plus links to other sites. Some parts of the site are restricted to members.

- **http://www.travelwithkids.about.com**

Another of the subsidiary guides from about.com it has a bit of this and that - articles, links, information on specific locations. A good all-around site to visit.

- **http://www.women.com/travel/family**

Articles on family trips, reprinted features from major magazines, reviews of special destinations.

Animal Abuse and Abuse Towards People

"Every year more than one million children nationally are confirmed as victims of abuse and/or neglect in the U.S. At the same time, thousands of our companion animals also fall victim to malicious cruelty and other forms of violence, often within the same cycle of family violence," according to the Fact Sheet of the American Humane Association Children's Division.

It makes sense that there would be a link between these two kinds of violence, and willfully hurting animals is a strong warning flag that parents can't ignore.

The American Humane Association has as its mission the protection of children and animals. Part of the activities consistent with that mission is the development of the National Resource Center on the Link Between Violence to People and Animals. The Link exists as an information service for both human-serving and animal-serving professionals.

➢ **For More Information**: 1 877 LINK-222 (1 877 546-5222); American Humane Association; 63 Inverness Drive East; Englewood, CO 80112-5117; Email - Link@americanhumane.org

Preschooler in the Kitchen

Summer Time Soups

Most of us wait for the summer. It's vacation time for all of us, young and old alike. We want to walk in the park or along the shore, swim in the pool, a lake, or get sprinkled with the garden hose.

Cooking time should be minimal. This month I am offering two very simple, but delicious cold soup recipes. They come from my culinary school days. Each year a few of us stayed in the school over the summer to advance our studies for the following year. We had to prepare many cold dishes; these soups were included. Later, when I finished my culinary studies, I taught children how to prepare these soups. I found that children who did not like these kinds of soups sometimes changed their minds once they helped to prepare them.

I think we should revive the making of soups, particularly cold ones for the summer.

These recipes are adapted to the American cuisine. We used wine, and hot pepper in the Borscht and Cucumber Soups when we made them in Brazil, but we used mineral water or juice when prepared for children.

These soups may be made one day in advance before being served.

Take your preschooler to the market with you. Show your youngster the ingredients which will be used for the soups. Buy the freshest yoghurt and sour cream. Choose the firmest cucumbers, shallots, and apples, and the freshest mint.

At home, rinse the cucumbers, shallots, green onions, apples and mint leaves with tepid water, then with cold water. Wrap in paper towels and refrigerate until time to use. Rinse the top of the cans before opening them.

Let us start to prepare the soups. Wash your hands, put on your aprons and let's begin.

Brazilian Borscht

Borche Brasileiro

4 - 15-oz. cans of beets, whole or sliced; reserve the juice
1 small shallot
1 apple
1 cup red grape juice
1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 cups light sour cream
1 cup plain yoghurt
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 tablespoon of honey
Pinch of salt
Garnishes (optional)
Cooked diced ham, turkey, sliced hard boiled eggs, chopped watercress, sour cream, yoghurt, or all the above.

▪ Adult: Open the cans of beets, reserve two cups of the liquid, and set aside. Julienne about 3 beets into match stick pieces and set them aside. Chop the shallot coarsely, set it aside. Peel the apple and chop it coarsely, set it aside.

▪ Child: Measure the beet juice and mix in the grape juice, vinegar, sour cream, yoghurt, honey, coriander, and salt.

▪ Adult: Place the remaining beets, shallot, and apple, in the bowl of a food processor or blender. Process for about 2 minutes. Add the juice mixture, and process for 1 minute longer. Taste for seasoning, add more if needed. Pour the soup in a bowl, cover well and refrigerate until time to serve.

▪ *At Serving time* - Adult: Ladle the soup into individual soup dishes or bowls. Garnish with julienned beets, and a dollop of sour cream or yoghurt, or the desired garnishes mentioned above.
Makes 4 - 5 servings

Sopa Fria De Pepino

Cucumber Cold Soup

3 European cucumbers (the long ones)
2 fresh limes
3 green onions
fresh mint leaves (about 16 leaves)
1 pint plain yoghurt
1/4 cup olive oil
Salt to taste
1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
1 cup mineral water

▪ Adult: Peel the cucumbers, cut them into halves, and set aside. Cut the limes into halves, and set aside. Coarsely chop the green onions and set them aside. Reserve about 8 mint leaves as a garnish coarsely chopping the remaining leaves using 7 or 8 to your taste.

▪ Child: Scoop the seeds from the cucumbers with a spoon and set them aside. Measure the yoghurt and place in the blender. Squeeze the juice from the limes, measuring about 1/4 cup of juice, and place in the blender. Measure the oil and place in the blender.

▪ Adult: Coarsely chop 5 cucumber halves, and place them in the blender. Julienne the remaining cucumber half, and place in a small container, covering and refrigerating it for later. Blend the ingredients until smooth. Stop the blender. Add the onions, chopped mint, salt, and pepper. Resume blending for about 1 minute. Cover the blender jar, and refrigerate until time to serve.

▪ Child: Measure 1 cup of mineral water, set it aside.

▪ Adult: Remove the blender from the refrigerator. Add mineral water and re-blend briefly. Taste for seasonings, add more if necessary. Ladle the soup into individual soup bowls, or plates.

▪ Child: Sprinkle a little bit of the julienned cucumber, and place 2 mint leaves on top of each bowl.

Remove your aprons, sit down next to a window, or on the porch, and slowly savor these refreshing cold soups which came all the way from the tropics. Enjoy a fantastic summer!

Sandra Allen

Library Resources

For Adults and Children

📖 ***When a Pet Dies*** by Fred Rogers; PaperStar; New York, 1998; Softcover $5.99. A book for parents to read and discuss with their children. Gentle and thorough, it provides reassurance that grieving is a part of healing.

Books for Children

📖 ***Arthur's New Puppy*** by Marc Brown; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; 1997; Boardbook, $6.95. Arthur has a new puppy who is active and naughty. Arthur believes that he'll be able to train the new puppy quickly. But the puppy has other ideas. The book makes it clear that puppies must be trained but that they can be great fun too.

📖 ***Albert*** by Donna Jo Napoli; illustrated by Jim La Marche; Silver Whistle (Harcourt, Inc.); San Diego, CA; 2001; Hardcover $16.00. Sometimes it is the compassion we show to living creatures that helps us grow the most. Albert always had an excuse for not leaving his apartment. But one day when he stuck out his hand through the window grate to check the weather a bird built a nest, right there in the palm of his hand. As Albert considered the situation, the bird filled the nest with eggs. If he pulled his hand back through the window grate the nest would be destroyed. So, he stood there day after day until the eggs hatched. The baby birds learned to leave the nest. And so did Albert. A lovely, charming book.

📖 ***Daddy, Could I Have an Elephant*** by Jake Wolf; pictures by Marylin Hafner; Puffin Books; New York; 1998; Softcover, $5.99. Dad is sleeping one morning when Tony announces that he needs a pet, preferably an elephant. They talk about other pets and settle on a dog. Whimsical illustrations punctuate the discussion.

📖 ***Doggy Dreams*** by Nancy Kapp Chapman; illustrated by Lee Chapman; G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York; 2000; Hardcover $15.99. This whimsical book answers the question "What do dogs dream about?" Dogs dream about everything from a cozy home and a gentle touch to earning big bones and cellular phones; told in rhyme with quirky illustrations.

📖 ***A Fish Named Spot*** by Jennifer P. Goldfinger; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; 2001; Hardcover $14.95. Simon's allergies prevent him from getting a dog. When his aunt brings him a fish and he feeds it dog biscuits it begins to act more like a dog. Eventually the fish goes back to being a fish. A funny and charming tale.

📖 ***Ginger*** by Charlotte Voake; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA; 1997; Hardcover $16.99. Ginger the cat had a very good life, until a new kitten joined the family. The result is sibling rivalry with Ginger leaving home. Ginger and the kitten end up as friends.

📖 ***Martha Blah Blah*** by Susan Meddaugh; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, MA; 1996; Softcover $5.95. Martha, the talking dog, is back. But there's a problem. Granny Flo took half the letters out of the alphabet soup. Instead of words Martha could only make strange sounds. But Granny Flo agrees to put all the letters back into the soup.

📖 ***McDuff and the Baby*** by Rosemary Wells; pictures by Susan Jeffers; Hyperion Books for Children; New York; 1997; Hardcover $12.95. McDuff the dog enjoys life with his family. A new baby temporarily changes that, but soon things work out. Evocative illustrations depict life in the 1940s.

📖 ***Mucky Pup*** by Ken Brown; Dutton Children's Books; New York; 1997; Hardcover $14.99. Puppies are fun, but they also make a mess. This little one does just that until he's kicked out of the house by the farmer's wife. He's such a mess even the animals won't play with him. But he lands in the water and ends up nice and clean.

📖 ***The Night Iguana Left Home*** by Megan McDonald; pictures by Ponder Goembel; Richard Jackson/DK Publishing, Inc.; New York; 1999; Hardcover, $15.95. Iguana loves living with Alison but she longs for Key West, Florida. So, she packs her things, spikes her hair and goes south. Iguana's escapades eventually lead her to the Keys but she mails herself back to Alison for regular visits. Vibrant illustrations add to the fun.

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📖 ***The Singing Hat*** by Tohby Riddle; Farrar, Straus and Giroux; New York; 2000; Hardcover $16.00. When Colin Jenkins took a nap under the tree he certainly didn't know that he would wake up with a bird's nest on his head. He didn't want to disturb the bird, or the egg. It wasn't easy for Mr. Jenkins; the world isn't ready for a man who has a nest on his head. But kindness is its own reward. A lovely book with an important message.

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Cuando los Niños Quieren una Mascota

Cuanto Vale ese Dragón Kimodo en la Ventana?

Es una tarde tranquila. Entras a la habitación de tu niño. En la silenciosa soledad escuchas el sonido "croac" que sale de alguna parte. Después que te repones de la sorpresa, gritas "Sabrinaaa"!!! y tu hija llega corriendo. "Pero si sólo es un sapo, mami"... dice con desdén. Y antes de que hayas dado cuenta que pasó, has adoptado otra mascota!

Gente y animales - un vínculo antiquísimo que es tan fuerte hoy como lo era cuando el primer cavernícola descubrió que podía mantenerse tibio abrazando a un animalito peludo a su pecho. Los animales todavía son una parte importante de las vidas y pensamientos de millones de personas a través del mundo. Quizás el hecho de que son criaturas vivientes es uno de los vínculos más importantes entre nosotros y nuestros animales compañeros. Hay algo que es increíblemente reconfortante sobre un gatitoque ronronea mientras duerme en un ovillo en tu falda o de los melancólicos ojos pardos de un cachorrito que te mira en una mañana dominical asoleada.

A través de los años, una gran variedad de criaturas han vivido en nuestro hogar. Desde perros y gatos a pinzones, canarios, peces, tortugas, caracoles, hámsteres, ratones y jerbos, los hemos querido y cuidado a todos. Los animales son un grato suplemento a nuestras vidas. Pero hay varias cosas importantes que hay que considerar antes de adoptar la decisión de obtener una mascota.

Qué Gracia Tienen las Mascotas?

Sentimientos de Supremacía

Cuidar a las mascotas les puede dar a los niños la sensación de sentirse competentes y habiles. Esta sensación de logro los ayuda a encontrar un lugar importante en su mundo y le enseña a los niños a varios niveles. Primero, tienen que aprender cómo realmente hacer las cosas involucradas en el cuidado de una mascota. Cuidadosamente vaciar la comida, lavar las vasijas de agua y peinar el pelo de un animal son parte de habilidades de aprendizaje y hacerlos bien son útiles para crear confianza en si mismo.

Con la ayuda de los padres, los niños también pueden beneficiarse educacionalmente teniendo una mascota. Se aprenden muchos hechos científicos y naturales como una extensión natural de ser dueño de una mascota y enriquecen la vida de un niño de maneras inimaginables.

Laila era una niña naturalmente curiosa que

vivía en una zona rural. Cuando su madre trajo a la casa un pollito quedó encantada. Ella consideró al pollito casi como si fuera hermano. Sin embargo, rápidamente empezaron las preguntas. Su intelecto curioso quería saber todo sobre el pollito y esto dio una introducción maravillosa a la ciencia y el medio ambiente. Todos los sabados, ella y su mami iban a la biblioteca pública donde encontraron libros y videos sobre pollos, pájaros y otras criaturas voladoras, domésticas y salvajes. "Rápidamente Laila le estaba contando a todo el mundo lo que había aprendido sobre su pollito. Se convirtió en la "experta" de la familia y su interés rápidamente se extendió a otros animales. Ella vive en un mundo muy rico porque ese pollo le abrió un universo completo de conocimientos", dice su madre Mónica.

Crecimiento Emocional

Sandra Whiteside, CSW, es la Directora de Turnabout Family-Based Foster Treatment Program para el North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center y una trabajadora social siquiátrica que ha usado terapia de mascotas por un largo tiempo en su ejercicio clínico. "Más y más, nuestra experiencia clínica está confirmando lo que la gente siempre ha sabido - vivir con una mascota cariñosa es curativo a todo nivel", dice.

El amor incondicional puede ayudar a mejorar la autoestima de los niños y reforzar su confianza. La idea de no ser juzgado, sino que simplemente aceptado porque uno existe es increíblemente seductora para cualquiera, no solo para los niños. Los niños responden al amor incondicional con amor incondicional. Una relación de este tipo con una mascota es mucho menos complicada que las que pueden tener con la familia y amigos. Un simple afecto "puro" con una mascota puede darle a los niños la confianza para buscar relaciones a las que nunca se hubiesen arriesgado.

"Nosotros usamos animales en nuestro trabajo con los niños y adolescentes con desordenes emocionales. Los niños aprenden la importancia de ser delicados y sensibles; aprenden a "leer" la comunicación de los animales y esto los ayuda a mejorar su habilidad a detectar los códigos sociales en las interacciones humanas", dice Whiteside.

"Al principio Roberto estaba tan retraído y tan temeroso del perro que ni siquiera lo podía mirar". "Pero eso cambió. Fue felicitado por tocar el perro brevemente. Paulatinamente, Roberto se dio cuenta que podía interactuar paulatinamente con el perro. Muy rápidamente estaba riéndose cuando le tiraba la pelota. Después de aproximadamente cuatro semanas de trabajo con el perro del tratamiento, Roberto, un niño muy frágil, ya no le temía y estaba evidentemente orgulloso de si mismo de haber superado su temor", recuerda la Sra. Whiteside.

"La interacción con las mascotas ayuda en la formación de relaciones de confianza y afecto con otros. Facilita el crecimiento de la compasión y empatía y entrega un interlocutor seguro para los secretos y los pensamientos privados" asevera la Sra. Whiteside. "Los niños que son tímidos y retraídos frecuentemente lo encuentran más fácil abrirse a un animal. Un niño tímido que camina con un perro amigable con correa tiene una inserción natural para socializar con otros niños. Los niños se fascinan con el perro y el niño es entonces atraído", dice.

"Miguel siempre estaba tan angustiado", nos informa su madre Maxine. "Cuando tenía alrededor de tres años, el perro de mi padre tuvo una camada de cachorritos y nosotros adoptamos uno. Miguel inmediatamente le tuvo afecto y rápidamente eran compañeros inseparables. A medida que pasaban los días y meses, empecé a notar que Miguel estaba menos ansioso. Los tiempos de transición eran menos estresantes para todos nosotros. Carlos y yo pensamos 'bueno, Miguel está empezando a madurar'. Nunca supimos el papel que jugaba Pelón. Una tarde pasé inesperadamente por la puerta de Miguel. El estaba de espaldas en el suelo con su cabeza en el estomago de Pelón. Le estaba hablando en voz baja sobre su día en la jardín infantil. Pelón estaba echado pacientemente, inmóvil, a medida que Miguel discutía su jornada. Fue en ese instante que me di cuenta cuan importante Pelón era para Miguel".

La Sra. Whiteside, que también es voluntaria en un conocido refugio para animales, resume los beneficios de las relaciones con animales: "Las mascotas dan lecciones sobre la vida tales como la reproducción, parto, enfermedades, accidentes, muerte y duelo. Ayudan a desarrollar conductas responsables y un sentimiento de compromiso con sus acciones. Finalmente, le dan al niño un vínculo real con la naturaleza y el mundo que los rodea y al mismo tiempo les enseña respeto por las criaturas vivientes".

Pensémoslo

Bien! Así que estás pensando tener una mascota. Seguramente hay algún tipo de mascota que es apropiada para todas las familias. El próximo paso es determinar que mascota es la mejor para tu familia. Un "buen ajuste" es absolutamente necesario para tener éxito en ser dueño de mascota.

Los dos padres trabajan? Entonces la respuesta puede ser un gato. Los gatos requieren poca mantención y se las pueden arreglar solos por largos periodos de tiempo. De acuerdo a la Sociedad de Educación Humanitaria- (Humane Education Society), la población de gatos mascotas en los

Estados Unidos ha subido a 63,8 millones en comparación a 55 millones de perros mascotas. La razón más probable de la popularidad de los gatos como mascotas seguramente tiene que ver con el hecho que son más adaptables a los estilos de vida de la gente trabajadora, aunque ciertamente requieren atención y cuidado.

Un perro? Los perros no tienen la reputación de ser el mejor amigo del hombre gratuitamente. Los perros dan años de amor y compañía pero recuerde que los perros requieren mucho trabajo. Ademas de caminatas periódicas, baños y alimentación, los perros requieren su presencia tanto como tu gozas de la de ellos. Pueden ponerse desesperanzados y angustiados cuando se los deja solos por largos periodos de tiempo. Las razas grandes necesitan mucho espacio para correr y jugar. Muchas razas les encanta masticar y masticar. Así que tome en cuenta cuanto tiempo los miembros de su familia van a poder estar con el perro antes de considerar un perro.

Peces? Los peces son mascotas maravillosas. Son bellos y fascinantes y requieren muy poco tiempo de su dueño. Muchos médicos y dentistas tienen acuarios de peces en sus salas de espera. Mirar a los peces de acuario pareciera tener un efecto calmante.

Qué tal un pájaro? Cuando traes a tu casa a un amigo emplumado vas a necesitar una jaula lo suficientemente grande para que pueda abrir las alas, vasos para alimentos y agua, un palo para que pose el ave, huesos de jibia, espejo, ripio y juguetes especialmente diseñados para el tipo de pájaro que tienes. Las aves, cuando están bien alimentadas y cuidadas, pueden vivir por un largo tiempo. La Sociedad de Educación Humanitaria es una organización ubicada en Leesburg, Virginia,

dedicada a fomentar el sentimiento de amor hacia los animales entre los niños y adultos. De acuerdo a Elizabeth Guillet, Vk, Educadora jefa de la Sociedad, los pericos y cacatúas pueden vivir hasta ocho y diez años mientas que algunas aves grandes pueden vivir hasta los cincuenta años!

Amiguitos peludos de cuatro patas? Hámsteres, gerbos y conejillos de Indias son mascotas apropiadas para niños porque son baratas de alimentar y no requieren tanto trabajo como los animales más grandes. Son naturalmente limpios, y cuando son cuidados adecuadamente, no tienen olor. Son mascotas buenas para las personas que viven en casas pequeñas o departamentos.

He Aquí Algunas Cosas que Hay que Tener en Mente al Decidir Sobre una Mascot:

*Lo primero y más importante - esté seguro. Todos los años millones de mascotas son adoptadas y abandonadas porque las familias no habían anticipado la cantidad de trabajo que involucra una mascota. Explore todas las opciones, considere todos los requisitos e información sobre la mascota que ha elegido y, entonces, y solo entonces, haga su decisión.

*Hay algún miembro de la familia que tenga asma o alergias? Entonces los gatos, perros y otros mamíferos están fuera. Pregúntele a su pediatra que examine a su a sus niños en cuanto a alergias específicas antes de salir y adquirir su mascota.

*Cuanto tiempo puede Ud. y su familia dedicarle al cuidado de la mascota? A los niños se les debe dar tareas específicas, que son apropiadas a su edad, al cuidado de su mascota. Pero recuerde, Ud. como padre seguramente estará haciendo la mayoría del trabajo de cuidar a la mascota así que Ud. debe ser realista sobre cuanto tiempo tiene durante el día para dedicarle a este aspecto de su vida. En la vida todo depende del momento preciso. Tiene tiempo para pasear el perro tres o cuatro veces al día? Tiene tiempo para limpiar la jaula de un loro espectacular pero muy sucio? Cuanto tiempo le puedes dedicar a amaestrarlo? Cuan a menudo van a tener que llevarlo al veterinario? Cuanto alimento, equipo e implementos para limpiarlo va a necesitar su mascota? Viajes largos y frecuentes a las tiendas que quizás no quepan en su horario. El tiempo es todo - y es importante considerarlo.

*Vive Ud. en un lugar donde su mascota puede desarrollarse? Muchas mascotas tienen un enorme rango de exigencias como espacio, temperatura y luz. Su familia vive en un departamento en la ciudad? Entonces un perro grande que necesita harto espacio para correr no es la mejor opción para ti. Le gustaría un acuario lleno de exóticos peces tropicales? Su hogar tiene el espacio y la capacidad para acomodar estanques, filtros y calentadores?

*Considere el costo. Las mascotas que requieren mucho equipo y atención

medica especial son caras.
Aunque una mascota exótica puede ser atractiva para Ud. y su familia, el costo puede ser prohibitivo.

La Sra. Guillet dice que las mascotas exóticas y salvajes, como los monos, culebras, lagartijas o especies raras de aves muy pocas veces son buenas mascotas. Es importante que los potenciales dueños piensen dos veces sobre una mascota exótica ya que son difíciles de cuidar, y frecuentemente requieren u medio ambiente y alimentos muy especiales. Sea realista sobre su presupuesto y busque una mascota que se ajuste bien a su finanzas. Una acotación especial: las mascotas de razas puras son mucho mas caras de comprar y cuidar que las razas mixtas.
*Qué edad tienen sus niños? Recuerde: los niños muy chicos nunca deben ser dejados sin supervisión con sus mascotas - nunca. Los niños chicos pueden tener mascotas con tal que Ud. le enseñe las reglas, para la seguridad de ellos y la de las mascotas. A los niños se les debe dar conciencia sobre la fuerza y de los estados de ánimos de las mascotas.

Si la Respuesta es "Si"!

La North Shore Animal League - America, un reconocido refugio de animales ubicado en Port Washington, New York, recomienda que los niños sean llevados a un refugio reconocido, antes de la adopción, para mirar y aprender sobre las necesidades y requerimientos de los animales. Las familias pueden concertar giras de estos establecimientos. Después de la visita, siéntese con su niño y conversen sobre lo que han visto y sobre que aprendieron. Discuta en términos realistas que se requiere si deciden adoptar una mascota. Si la decisión es "si" haga una lista de tareas y reglas de las cuales será responsable el niño.
Como padre "mascota" de hace mucho tiempo, se me ocurren las siguientes reglas:
(1) Enséñele a su niño a manejar su mascota con seguridad. Si empujan, aprietan, o tiran a la mascota tienen la posibilidad de ser heridos de alguna forma. Hágales entender que si hieren a su mascota, la mascota se defenderá y que eso es justo. Tienen que comprender que ser tiernos es los mas importante.
(2) Los niños deben saber que nunca deben molestar a su mascota cuando está comiendo, durmiendo o cuidando a su prole. También dígales que cuando una mascota está jugando agresivamente con un juguete (por ejemplo, un juguete para jalar) los niños deben tener cuidado de no interrumpir el juego.
(3) Nunca - nunca- deje a un niño muy chico solo y sin supervisión con una mascota - es demasiado peligroso para la mascota y el niño.
(4) No obstante cuan buena es la relación de un niño con su mascota, se les tiene que enseñar que nunca se pueden acercar a un animal desconocido o de la calle bajo ninguna circunstancia. Incluso si el animal tiene correa, a un niño se le debe enseñar que siempre debe hablar con el dueño antes de acercarse a un animal desconocido.
(5) Enséñele a su niño a siempre lavarse las manos cuidadosamente después de tocar cualquier mascota. Recuerde que las mascotas como las tortugas son portadoras de salmonela y otras bacterias, por lo tanto estas mascotas nunca son una buena opción para niños muy chicos.

"Quiero Ayudar"

Después de años de observar a mi hija y a sus amigas, he descubierto que hay ciertas tareas que los niños pueden hacer en cada edad. Estos tipos de tareas son de sentido común y a los padres seguramente se les puede ocurrir otras más:

Tareas que Pueden Hacer los Niños:

* Niños Chicos con Supervisión
a) Lanzar un juguete o acariciar suavemente su mascota
b) Darle comida seca a los mamíferos o semillas a los pájaros
c) Dispersar alimento para peces
d) Alabar a una mascota por portarse bien y ofrecerle un regalo alimenticio.

* Niños de Tres a Cinco Años con Supervisión
a) Lavar, enjuagar y llenar la vasija de agua
b) Arrojar la pelota para que el perro la devuelva.
c) Arrastrar un juguete para que el gato lo persiga
d) Acompañar a un padre que esta paseando el perro.
e) Observar y aprender a medida que un padre amaestra una mascota.
f) Ayudar a lavar y limpiar los vasos y la jaula de los pájaros.
g) Acompañar y ayudar a los padres cuando salen a comprar alimentos y suministros de mascotas

* Seis Años y Más, Con Supervisión
a) Asumir responsabilidad (con los padres recordándoles) de la alimentación y del agua de las mascotas
b) Cepillar y asear a las mascotas
c) Ayudar a bañar a las mascotas
d) Alimentar los peces
e) Alimentar los pájaros
f) Limpiar la caja del gato bajo supervisión
g) Limpiar las virutas, lavar y secar la jaula de un roedor

Etapas Para Mantener a una Mascota Segura, Sana y Contenta

La Sociedad Humanitaria

(Humane Society) de los Estados Unidos, en su constante lucha para acabar con el abuso de animales, la crueldad, y el desamparo, alienta a los dueños de mascotas a considerar las siguientes acciones para apoyar a los animales - especialmente los perros y los gatos:

* Asegúrese que su mascota use un distintivo de identificación para que pueda ser devuelto en caso de que se pierda.
* Para evitar problemas conductuales destructivos de parte de los animales, inscriba a su cachorrito inmediatamente en clases de amaestramiento conductual. Muchos refugios tienen gratis estos tipos de clases constantemente.
* Asegúrese que su mascota tenga un examen por un medico veterinario completo por lo menos una vez al año. Recuerde que los problemas de conducta animal pueden estar relacionados a la salud.
* Prepárese para los desastres. Asegúrese que Ud. tiene un plan para su mascota en caso de huracán, tornado, incendio, tormenta de nieve, o inundación.
* Aprenda como evitar ser mordido o atacado por un perro y aprenda como evitar que su perro muerda. Contáctese con Sociedad Humanitaria local o SAPCA para más información sobre donde se ofrecen clases en su comunidad.
* Asegúrese que su mascota haya sido esterilizado. Millones de gatos y perros abandonados sufren abuso, hambre, abandono y enfermedades.
* Evite animales de moda o compras atolondradas. Tome tiempo para aprender todo lo posible sobre cualquier mascota que esté considerando para su familia.
* Trate solo con criadores de reputación, tiendas de mascotas, o refugios para asegurarse que su mascota es sana y ha sido criada en un ambiente humanitario. Pregúntele a su Sociedad Humanitaria local o veterinario que le dé referencias.

Una Ultima Palabra

Ser dueño de una mascota puede ser una de las experiencias de la vida más agradables y satisfactorias para el niño y para Ud. Un padre lo plantea de la siguiente manera, "Mi señora y yo trabajamos así que el cuidado y sustento de nuestros tres pájaros, dos gatos y un jerbo nos ocupa una gran parte de nuestro tiempo. Pero las lecciones que han aprendido nuestros niños a través de los años, la alegría que experimentamos cada vez que los vemos jugando juntos, los maravillosos recuerdos que hemos acumulado, compensan mucho más que el trabajo involucrado". Y así es la cosa... Ud. es o no es una persona adepta a las mascotas. Si Ud. no lo es, no hay nada que pueda decir alguien que cambie ese hecho. Pero si Ud. lo es, nada es demasiado trabajo o difícil que se pueda comparar a la alegría desenfrenada que uno experimenta cuando un cachorrito gordo se acurruca a su lado, bosteza, y se queda dormido en sus brazos.

Jane E. Mechwood-Yazdpour es una escritora independiente y Ejecutiva de Información Publica en el North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center. Esposa y madre, ha sido una persona adepta a las mascotas toda su vida.

Cuando Muere Una Mascota

Los niños estarán llenos de preguntas cuando muere una mascota. "Por qué pasó? Fue mi culpa? Veré a mi mascota otra vez"? son solo algunas de las preguntas que surgirán después de la muerte de una mascota. Los padres deben contestar todas las preguntas con sencillez, clara y honestamente. Si una mascota está enferma o agonizando, los padres deben dedicar tiempo a conversar sobre esto y preparar al niño para lo inevitable. Si es posible, ayúdele a su niño decirle "adiós" antes que muera.

Recuerde que los niños guardan duelo de maneras que no reconocemos. No solamente van a estar tristes, también pueden estar enojados o sentirse culpables cuando muere su mascota. Pueden negar el hecho. No hay una mejor manera para un padre para ayudar a sus niños a guardar duelo. Puede ser útil hablar sobre las mascota con amigos y familiares pero, en ultima instancia, el proceso de duelo debe ocurrir de la manera que quiere el niño y a su propio tiempo. Los padres, sin embargo, puede ayudar, guiar y reconfortar. Pueden decirles a sus niños que es normal echar de menos a su mascota y sentir la perdida. Los padres deben simplemente "estar" cuando se los necesita, alentando al niño a compartir sus sentimientos y a procesar su perdida.

Los niños muy chicos generalmente perciben la muerte como algo temporal que puede ser revertido. Por esta razón se les debe contar explícitamente sobre la muerte de su mascota. En un entorno conocido, los padres puede abrazar a sus hijos mientras le explican en una voz suave que su mascota a dejado de moverse, que ya no puede ver ni escuchar, y que no despertará nunca más. Quizás un padre tenga que repetir esto más de una vez. Es extremadamente importante que los padres sean honestos cuando le hablan a sus hijos sobre la muerte. Tratar de proteger al niño usando eufemismos y siendo vagos o imprecisos puede crear angustia, confusión y desconfianza.

Para más información contacte la American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP); P.O. Box # 96106; Washington, DC 20090. Pida "Facts for Families ©;" # 8 Children and Grief y # 75 Children and Pets.

Prevención de Mordidas de

Perro

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(212) 569 6475

La Sociedad Americana para la Prevención de Crueldad hacia los Animales (SAPCA) dice que el 50% de todos los niños en Estados Unidos serán mordidos por un perro antes de que cumplan los 12 años. A los niños se le deben enseñar desde muy temprana edad la manera apropiada de comportarse cuando se está cerca de animales. SAPCA ofrece los siguiente lineamientos para evitar las mordidas de perro:

1) Nunca mire directamente a los ojos de un perro.
2) No moleste a perros que están detrás de las rejas.
3) Nunca se acerque a los perros que están encadenados en los patios.
4) Nunca toque o acérquese a un perro sin correa. Informe inmediatamente a un adulto sobre perros sin correas.
5) No corra ni grite si un perro sin correa se le acerca. Quédese inmóvil y muy silencioso.
6) Nunca toque o juegue con un perro que está comiendo o durmiendo.
7) Pídale permiso al dueño antes de acercarse a cualquier perro.
8) Después de recibir permiso, acérquese calmada y silenciosamente dejando al perro husmear su mano cerrada y extendida.

Para más información sobre niños y mascotas contacte a SAPCA; 424 East 92nd St.; New York, NY 10128-6804; (212) 876-7700; http://www.aspca.org

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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Writing a Life Book with Our Children

A Tool to Help Families Manage Life Passages

Families pass through many life transitions. How can parents help children manage these often profound changes in their lives? I've found that writing stories with my children helps them with the shifts and adjustments that characterize everyone's lives.

Although parents may not always realize it, childhood is filled with change. Children are constantly being asked to adjust to developmental growth. Each new step poses a challenge and sometimes a loss. Toileting means children have to give up diapers and take control over their own bathroom needs. Even the demands of beginning to control their temper, using a new bedtime routine, or starting school, require adjustments and new behaviors.

On top of that there are changes that affect the nature of the family, like divorce, a move, the loss of a grandparent, a new sibling. These adjustments challenge children's emotions, and stir feelings within the whole family.

Not only do children often need help understanding and managing the new events of family life and the course of their own development, but even simple changes in parents' lives can cause confusion and upset in the lives of their children. For example, parents may not think that putting in extra hours on the job will affect their youngsters, but it can create a cascade of changes that distress children. A parent may not be there for a bedtime routine, or comes home too late for the family dinner (and, a lot of learning and reassuring contact happens at family meals).

Of course, parents do sit down and talk to children about these changes. One lesson I learned when I told my own children about some "news," was that they often forgot important aspects of our conversation or became confused about important details. They also liked being reminded that I understood their point of view and their feelings. But I couldn't just keep repeating what would happen and why. They needed an opportunity to see what I was saying. What would be a way to do this? I realized that if I made them a book, they could then see all the parts of each event. It would be their own story, and they could also hear it over and over again.

Although the goal of writing stories with my children was to help them anticipate the changes of the new events and their feelings about them, I found that the work in constructing the story helped me too. I had to think about my child's feelings. Moreover, I had to make sure I "guessed" the child's feelings correctly. This meant I had to work with my youngster to develop the book. I learned to hear and feel

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the child's dilemma without judgment.

There is no substitute for a parent's understanding and care as you undertake making a story together. By working with your child, you also learn the "extra" things you might do to help your child. Finally, reading the story together gives you an opportunity to share and experience the warmth associated with this very special story time. Whatever fate brings into a family's life it is the shared experience and shared struggle that brings the child and parent closer together.

Even simple changes in parents' lives can cause confusion and upset in the lives of their children.

Making the Book

When you make a book with your child about a life transition, there are some key points to keep in mind.

1. Look at the transition or challenge as an opportunity for learning.

➔ A book about moving to another state might be:

• When we all move to Texas, we will find lots of new things.

In addition you can suggest making some pictures about all the new things the family will see.

➔ For a new class in school:

• When you go to your new class, you'll meet lots of new people.

• New teachers! New kids! New Parents!

• We might feel a little shy, but we can learn how to say hello to new friends.

2. Identify the positive outcome that you wish for your child. Sometimes it is a feeling of pride that comes with mastering a new skill, and both the feeling and the accomplishment are important. Other times, the goal is to be able to control one's temper, or one's worries, even when something is happening that one may not like.

3. Be prepared to acknowledge the sadness and anger your child may feel from the demands placed upon him/her. For Example:

➔ Jason was sad to say goodbye to his crib. He was mad that Mommy and Daddy asked him to move and that the new baby was now in his old crib.

➔ Marguerita was mad; she didn't like her new teacher. She was sad. She wished that Mrs. Vela was in her class this year too.

4. Images and pictures are part of the process of making books. Art is a way for children to reveal their emotions. When a child draws a picture of the new teacher, makes a black border, and then covers over the picture with dark colors, you can guess that there's a little stress. You can just write in the page next to the picture, "Sometimes it's hard to have a new teacher."

All these points are important parts of the storybook. If we try to ignore our children's feelings of sadness or anger, the children may recognize the story to be a piece of wishful thinking and reject it as false: If the challenge and goal of the change are not recognized, an opportunity to confirm a new sense of mastery is lost.

Making a Story About Transitions

To begin the story, identify the bare bones of what is, or will, happen. Identify the feelings the child may experience. Always remember: SAD, MAD, GLAD, SCARED, and BAD. You can write a little sentence about each one so your child hears about all of them.

Each page that relates a fact, can be followed by a page that expresses feelings.

➔ Let's take a book about going to day care as an example. The book might read as follows:

• In January, Johnny is going to a new day care.

• Sometimes he is worried about who his new teacher will be

• Even though you might like the feeling to "go away," you don't need to come up with answers for your child all the time. After you read the page, you could say, "What could we do to make things easier?"

➔ A book about a new baby might go like this:

• The new baby is coming to our house when all the leaves turn bright colors. Everybody is excited to see what the new baby will look like.

Since you are helping your child with something that you know will happen, just write out the steps of the different things the child will notice: the changes in Mommy's body before a new baby or all the activities that take place before a move to a new house. Then, talk to your child about those five feelings. Think of the different things that might trigger each of the feelings. When you read it together, your child will help you realize which are most important.

These books may sound too short, but they don't have to be any longer than that for a very young child. Remember, the book is only a vehicle to help your child understand and cope with a life change. It opens the door for conversation and discussion and allows you to talk to your child about important issues. It will also give your youngster something tangible to hold, look at, even redo as time goes along.

Making a Story About New Mastery

It isn't really surprising that a child might struggle with one more step in "becoming big." Preschoolers have to manage more new developmental steps, in a shorter period, than at any other time in the life cycle. Even at 20, 35, or even 65 we may wish to have some guideposts

Whatever fate brings into a family's life it is the shared experience and shared struggle that brings the child and parent closer together.

about what life will hold. Growing older and getting bigger is a little scary. It means giving some things up too. Loss and change result in sad feelings even when there are exciting adventures ahead. Just like grown-ups, children can have more than one feeling about any life experience.

Children feel self-reliant when they can successfully take a new step forward. A new skill, or increased self control leads to a sense of pride, but it also enhances a parent's sense of self-esteem. Children feel proud when they are potty-trained, or learn to control their anger, and so do their parents.

Parents need to remember that children get ready for different developmental steps at somewhat different times. Although children may need to give up something, like thumb sucking or a blankie, not all children are ready at the same time. Parents need to accept a child's cues and understand the child's own pacing for those steps. Sometimes the more parents push the more reluctant the youngster becomes, but parents can gently encourage taking those steps forward.

The story that follows is one that was written to help a child manage the conflict between his desire to play instead of toileting. His wish to play with his trucks is in conflict with the necessity of going to pee in the toilet if he is to wear his "big boy" pants. These mixed feelings are described in the book *I Don't Want to Be a Big Boy.*

Page 1: I really like to play. I like to play with my cars and trains. I like to play with my trucks. I like to play with my friend Ben.
Page 2: I go to the store with Mommy and I go to nursery school too. That's when I got my Big Boy underwear. Sometimes I get so busy I forget to go pee and then I get wet.
Page 3: Mommy says, "Is that your pee pee dance?" Mommy says, "Do you need to go to the bathroom?" Mommy says, "Timmy, go to the bathroom right now."
Page 4: Sometimes I just want to play. Sometimes I don't notice my pee pee dance. Sometimes I get mad and sad when I'm wet and I say: "I don't want to be a big boy."
Page 5: I like to be a big boy when I go to the store. I like to be a big boy when I can play with Ben outside all by myself. I'm big enough to catch a ball too. Sometimes when Mommy says, "Pick up your toys," I wish I didn't have to be big. It's a hard job.
Page 6: Sometimes it's hard to be a big boy all the time.

Here's another story about an important transition: *Mommy's New Job.*

Page 1: Mommy got a new job today.
Page 2: Mommy says she's really happy but a little sad too.
Page 3: Mommy won't be able to pick me up from school now. Mommy and Daddy say it will be Daddy's job. She'll still drop me off just like always. Everybody gets new jobs in this family!
Page 4: I will miss seeing Mommy after school. It makes me sad.
Page 5: Mommy and Daddy say that I will still have fun with Daddy when he picks me up and everybody will still have supper together.
Page 6: Sometimes I just don't like changes. Mommy and Daddy say that sometimes nobody does.

As parents we hope to help our children feel a little less afraid of taking these steps forward and, when they do, help them feel a new sense of mastery, pride and accomplishment. The child can conclude that this step forward was worth the effort. However, moving forward should not mean losing one's sense of security. When our toddlers are beginning their journeys away from us with their first steps, they still need to turn around and check-in. They still need to know that their cheering section is behind them and ready to catch them, just in case they feel a little shaky.

If Your Children Don't Like the Book

Sometimes a child may get mad at the BOOK for bringing up the troublesome topic, for instance, about the parent's divorce, a move, an illness, or an issue with a sibling. The child's cry, "I don't want to hear that dumb book," or, finding it shredded into little pieces, gives the parent an opportunity to understand how much the child does not like having to go to the dumb doctor or hates the fact that Mommy and Daddy are not living together anymore. This is actually an opportunity to help the child focus on the mad (or sad) feelings.

The parent who is reading the book (or has just found it under a pile of dirty laundry, or shredded into pieces) can then sympathize with the child that "nobody likes being sick", or having

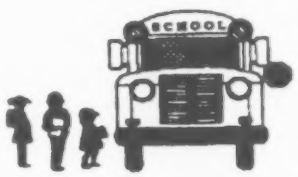
a "Mommy and Daddy who live in different places" is not fun. The child's reaction is another opportunity for dialogue and reflection. The child's feelings don't need to get closed off or denied.

If the topic is a timely one, but painful to consider, give your child more time to talk about feelings. Ask questions. Gently remind the child that you know that the book can make the child feel sad or mad. Sympathize with the fact that it is hard to talk about these feelings. Remind your child that it is an important job to do together. Be patient. For difficult issues, children may need more support and comfort in order to approach more emotionally charged topics.

If the child rejects the book; calmly share the idea that this book is about something mad, sad or scary. "I know the book makes you feel bad. I feel bad too, but we can sit together and talk about it." The more you can help your child know that you can tolerate and accept those difficult feelings, the easier it will be for the child to share those feelings. Little by little, the child will begin to be more accepting of different pages in the book.

Remember, even if your child decides he doesn't want to read the book, or a part of the book, you can still talk about the changes and his feelings. You can make a new story. Or, your child may want to dictate to you a fantastical story that is the opposite of everything that will happen. Make room for your child's need for space. Your first story book may need to come back a little later.

Bob Ziegler, M.D., is an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard University Medical School in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the Cambridge Health Alliance in Massachusetts. Dr. Ziegler's most recent volume is: "Sharing Care: The Integration of Family Approaches with Child Treatment." His book for parents, "Homemade Books to Help Kids Cope" was published by Magination Press; American Psychological Association, Washington, DC.



Dear Reader,

Transitions – even the best of changes can be upsetting. They require us to adjust, alter the way we think, act, or feel. It's tough for adults, and it's even more difficult for our youngsters. How can we help them? Dr. Bob Ziegler has developed an innovative and powerful approach: home-made books.

Ever since we reviewed Dr. Ziegler's book on this subject we've been hoping he would write an article for us. This month we are delighted to share it with our readers.

Of course, there are also already printed books on some of the transitions and changes kids face reviewed in Library Resources.

Our Research News column summarizes the results and implications of a new study of the influence of peers on the play of young children.

Start the school year off with *A Reading Calendar* by Nancy Browning, Ed.D. It's a month's worth of great ideas to bring reading into your youngster's life.

Finally, the Health Corner talks about a risk facing infants from parents and care-givers: shaken baby syndrome. It only takes a moment's lapse for damage to happen.

Welcome back - hope your had a great summer and are ready for an even better fall!

Heide Schwartzberg

Ready for Nursery School?

Every parent faces the question "Is my little one ready for school?" How can we know when the time is right? If we have older children, our youngest ones will hear all of the "school stories" and will probably anticipate their school adventure with either trepidation or with happiness. We must always remember that children who are pushed before they are ready may experience failure and begin the "catch-up" game pretty early in life.

Sandy Wolkoff, CSW, Director of the Marks Family Right from the Start 0-3+ Center says that, although a child may be precocious in an academic sense, he may not be ready (both physically and emotionally) for long days at nursery school or kindergarten. "Development takes it own time in each child" says Ms. Wolkoff, "each child will have his own emotional and physical timetable which we ignore at our own peril."

Are there any hard and fast rules to consider? Parents need to listen to their own instincts. Think about the tasks a child might be asked to do in school. Can your child separate easily from her parents? Is she able to listen? Can she follow directions? Is he able to use the toilet independently? Can he interact with other children easily? Can she use a pen and pencil? Can he give his name, address, age, phone number or other identifying information? All of the answers to these questions will point parents in the right direction. If he's ready - don't hold him back. If he isn't ready - give him some time and space.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Shaken Baby Syndrome:

Never, Never Shake a Baby

A parent, faced with a continuously crying baby, loses control and shakes the baby until the crying stops. Unfortunately, the result for that infant can be brain damage, or even death.

How Shaking a Baby Causes Damage

People probably don't mean to hurt the baby. They don't hit the child but they don't realize that babies really are fragile.

"When you shake a baby the forces go right to the brain," says Dr. Donna Persaud, MD, a child abuse expert and associate professor of pediatrics at University of Texas - Southwestern Medical Center; Dallas, Texas. "Their neck muscles are relatively weak and can't stabilize their head or protect the brain from the forces being delivered." When a baby is shaken the brain moves rapidly back and forth, changing direction with each move. "It's like rattling an egg yolk," says Persaud, and this causes injuries to the nerve cells.

That's not all that can happen. "Blood vessels in the covering of the brain can break and the blood builds up in the brain causing serious injury."

Signs of a Shaken Baby

Despite serious internal injury, there are no outward signs that a baby is being hurt, although most people would agree that the level of shaking is harmful. But there are no bruises, blood, or cuts. There's no way to know if a baby has been harmed unless doctors do a brain scan. "It's easy to miss some of these babies and diagnose them as having another condition," says Persaud.

Serious Effects

There's a spectrum of mild to severe effects, depending on the severity of the shaking and the characteristics of the baby. "The milder symptoms can look like a cold or viral infection," says Persaud. "The baby might vomit, and become irritable. But the baby might also become lethargic or even comatose." In some cases, the damage is severe enough to cause death.

Even mild damage, which might go unnoticed, causes problems later on. Depending on the extent of the damage, babies can suffer long term effects such as persistent seizures, developmental delays, late walking, talking, and visual impairment. "Even mild shaking can cause learning difficulties that don't show up until the child enters school," says Persaud.

Could You and Your Child be at Risk?

Raising babies isn't easy. They cry – some seem to cry all the time. Parents are stressed by financial problems and constant lack of sleep. Baby could be ill. Parents may be poorly prepared and feel isolated and overwhelmed. There could be too much time spent one-on-one with a cranky baby without respite, leaving a parent feeling unable to cope. The crying becomes louder and louder. "You know you're supposed to do something but you just can't quiet the baby," describes Persaud. For whatever reason, a parent snaps, and the baby suffers.

Here's What to Do

The most common reason people shake a baby is constant crying.

✦ First, of course, parents try to figure out what's the matter. Is the baby hungry? Physically ill and uncomfortable? Babies who cry all the time need to be checked by a doctor to rule out a medical problem.

✦ Try to soothe the baby. After you've checked all the physical reasons baby could be crying (e.g hunger, wet diaper), try to soothe the youngster. Offer the baby a pacifier. Hold the infant against your chest and rock slowly back and forth. Take the baby for a ride in the stroller, or even in the car.

✦ Suppose you're starting to lose control. You feel your anger rising and you're tempted to handle your infant roughly.

Stop. Put the baby down gently in the crib. Leave the room. Take a shower, listen to some soothing music. Call a friend or family member on the phone and ask for some help.

✦ Take advantage of community resources. Many communities have young parent programs available through hospitals, mental health and community organizations. They provide information, but also assistance in coping with the stresses of parenting.

"Protecting children protects everybody," sums up Persaud. It saves children the damage they may suffer from being shaken, and it saves parents the pain of hurting their babies, and having to live with the consequences for years down the road.

Neala Schwartzberg, PhD.

A Reading Calendar

Nancy F. Browning, Ed.D.

Reprinted from
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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Read a recipe. Refer to it, find the ingredients and cook together.	2 Have your child teach you a song or jump rope rhyme. Write it down for him to read.	3 Attend story hour at the library.
4 Invite your child's friends and tell a good fairy tale by candlelight.	5 Open the mail together and talk about it.	6 Send your child a card or letter through the mail.	7 Dramatize a story using costumes or puppets, if desired.	8 Leave a note for your child. (Use pictures as cues.) Encourage her to respond in writing.	9 Tell your preschooler a favorite story without using a book.	10 Explore the library, checking out books for yourself and for your child.
11 Investigate a topic of interest to your child (such as dinosaurs) by going to the library.	12 While driving or walking, take turns reading signs to each other.	13 Before reading a book, look at the cover and ask your child to predict the plot.	14 Let your child choose one of his writings to read to you.	15 Read some poetry together.	16 While reading, stop a few times to predict what might happen next. Think of a few possibilities.	17 Look at the family album and tell stories about your childhood
18 Before taking a walk together, tell your child to remember all the things he sees, hears, smells, and touches. Have him dictate a story about the walk.	19 Let your child write her own story making her own letters or marks. Have her read it to you. To help you remember the story, write it using traditional spelling.	20 Let your child "read" a favorite book to you. Accept his version.	21 Let your child create a new ending for a story.	22 Explore a wordless picture book. Using paper clips, attach your child's version of the story to the bottom of each page.	23 Make one or more lists with your child. List things to do, things she wants, people you know, etc.	24 Explore books at a bookstore.
25 Using a photo album, or bound paper, make a book using cut up magazines, greeting cards, and drawings. Talk and write about the pictures.	26 Write an "I Wish" poem by starting every line with "I Wish...." No need to rhyme!	27 Help your child write and mail a letter to a friend or relative, or to an author whose book you like.	28 Set aside 15 minutes in which your entire family can read silently. Your preschooler can look through her picture books.	29 Share the reading of a known book by letting your child "read" one character's part (for example: the baby bear).	30 Look at pictures in newspapers or magazines and guess how the people feel. Write a story about the pictures.	31 Plan a menu with your child, make a list, shop together, and then cook together.

Research News

Playing with Same-Sex Friends Reinforces Typical Sex Role Behavior in Social Activities

A recent study published in Developmental Psychology suggests that even at an early age same-sex peer groups affect how boys and girls play.

Study authors Carol Lynn Martin, PhD, and Richard A. Fabes, PhD of Arizona State University observed the play of 61 children, three to six years of age, over a six-month period at a university day-care center. The researchers found that on average the children spent about 50%-60% of their social interactions with peers of the same sex, and relatively little (10%-15%) with other-sex children.

They also found that the more both girls and boys played with same-sex peers the more their play became differentiated. Not only did the play of boys and girls became more and more different over the course of the study, "the more time boys spent playing with other boys in the fall, the greater the likelihood that they were observed to be rougher, more aggressive and more active in their play the following spring," said the authors in a press release issued by the American Psychological Association.

The boys seemed to find this active play pleasing and exciting. The more boys played with other boys in this dominance-oriented play the more positive emotions they were observed to express over time. Boys who do not enjoy this kind of play may withdraw or be rejected by the other boys.

"For girls, exposure to same-sex peers appears to contribute to a relatively calmer style of interaction. Girls with increased exposure to other girls during the fall showed lower aggression and activity levels in the spring."

One possible explanation for these findings is that some peers may act as gender 'enforcers,' actively providing message about gender-appropriate behavior.

The authors note that as children grow older these patterns of behavior may become more ingrained leading to the increases in sex segregation that are seen later in childhood. In fact, over time it may be increasingly difficult for children to interact compatibly with other-sex children who have developed a different set of social skills, styles, expectations, and preferences.

The Stability and Consequences of Young Children's Same-Sex Peer Interactions, Carol Lynn Martin, PhD and Richard A. Fabes, PhD Arizona State University, Developmental Psychology, Vol. 37, No.3 pages 431-446.

What Does This Mean?

We know that older children are strongly influenced by their peers. Parents of teens and preteens usually feel that they are fighting a losing battle trying to change their children's behavior. Research has now found that peer influence starts much earlier. It can begin in the preschool to create the stereotypical play we associate with girls and boys. The more the young girls play together the more similar their play becomes and the more different from young boys.

But there is a down-side to this. The more stereotypic their play the less boys and girls may play together. It may channel their interests and perhaps even limit the kinds of activities they pursue as some activities and styles of play become "for girls" or "for boys."

Further, the boys who don't feel comfortable with rough and tumble physical play and are not able to fit in express less positive emotions, perhaps foreshadowing later problems with peers. These findings may offer a reason to create an environment and atmosphere that encourages a diversity of play styles and experiences.

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moving ???

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Library Resources

Transitions and Changes

New Baby

📖 ***A Baby's Coming to Your House!*** by Shelley Moore Thomas; photographs by Eric Futran; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL, 2001; Hardcover, $15.95. Using photographs of diverse families the book talks about what happens when a new baby comes. Parents will spend a lot of time with the baby, but they'll always have time for you.

📖 ***Franklin and the Baby*** based on characters created by Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark; Scholastic, Inc.; New York, 1999; Softcover, $4.50. Franklin's friend Bear is going to be a big brother. When his little sister is born they find that being a big brother is not as they imagined.

📖 ***A New Baby at KoKo Bear's House*** by Vicki Lansky; illustrations by Jane Prince; Book Peddlers, Minnetonka, MN, 1990; Softcover, $5.95. KoKo Bear is getting a baby sister. Not only can children follow the story, but on each page there are parent tips.

📖 ***A New Baby at Your House*** by Joanna Cole; photographs by Margaret Miller; Mulberry Books, William Morrow & Company; New York, 1998; Softcover, $5.95; Hardcover, $16.00. Using photos of diverse families the book provides much information on new babies combined with an exploration of feelings of the older sibling.

📖 ***Rosie and Tortoise*** by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks; DK Publishing; New York, 1999; Hardcover $14.95. Rosie the rabbit is getting a new sibling, and she's hopping with excitement. Once her baby brother is born, he is so tiny that Rosie is afraid. After her father's explanation of growth, Rosie feels she can hold the baby.

Starting School

📖 ***Annabelle Swift, Kindergartner*** by Amy Schwartz; Orchard Books; New York, 1988; Softcover $6.95. Annabelle is starting school and her big sister Lucy is going to help her. But everything Lucy tells her backfires. But Lucy did teach Annabelle how to count to 100. When she is the only one in the class able to count, she impresses everyone.

📖 ***Pete and Polo's Big School Adventure*** by Adrian Reynolds, Orchard Books; New York 2000; Hardcover $15.95. Pete is ready for his first day of school with Polo his polar bear. At school all the other kids have brown teddy bears. After returning from recess, there's a problem. All the brown bears look alike and only Polo is easily recognized.

📖 ***Timothy Goes to School*** by Rosemary Wells; Puffin Books (Penguin Putnam); New York, 2000; Softcover $5.99. Timothy was looking forward to school until he met Claude. Claude criticizes everything. Then Timothy meets Violet who has the same problem with another girl in the class.

Moving

📖 ***Annabelle's Big Move*** by Carla Golembe; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston, 1999; Hardcover, $12.00. Two stories in one about Annabelle the dog and her family's big move. It was scary for her, especially being a dog. In the second story, Annebelle is lonely. Her owner takes her to the dog beach where she learns to swim and makes new friends.

📖 ***My Best Friend Moved Away*** by Nancy Carlson; Viking Press; New York, 2001; Hardcover $15.99. Sometimes it's not the child who moves, but the child's very close friend. This book tells the story of a little girl whose best friend moved away.

📖 ***Tigger's Moving Day*** by Kathleen W. Zoehfeld; illustrated by Robbin Cuddy; Disney Press; New York, 1999; Hardcover $11.99. Tigger has to find a bigger house. In his new house he misses his friends. He's happier when all his friends come for a visit and a party.

Parental Divorce

📖 ***I Don't Want to Talk About it*** by Jeanie Franz Ransom; illustrated by Kathryn Kunz Finney; Magination Press, American Psychological Association; Washington, DC 2000; Softcover. A little girl has to face her parents' divorce. As they talk to her, all she keeps saying is "I don't want to talk about it." In her mind, however, she expresses her emotions and reactions. An excellent book to read with children, plus it contains valuable information and suggestions for parents.

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Escribir un Libro de Vida con Nuestros Niños

Una Herramienta Para Ayudar a las Familias a Manejar las Transiciones de la Vida

Las familias pasan a través de muchas transiciones en la vida. ¿Cómo pueden los padres ayudar a sus hijos a manejar estos cambios frecuentemente profundos en sus vidas? Yo he notado que escribir historias con mis hijos los ayuda con los cambios y ajustes que caracterizan las vidas de todos.

Aunque los padres no siempre se dan cuenta, la infancia está llena de cambios. A los niños se le está pidiendo constantemente que se adapten al crecimiento del desarrollo. Cada nueva etapa plantea un desafió y, a veces, una perdida. Aprender a usar el baño significa que los niños tienen que abandonar los pañales y asumir control sobre sus propias necesidades. Incluso las demandas de empezar a controlar su genio, usar un nuevo hábito al acostarse, o empezar a ir a la escuela, requiere de ajustes y nuevas conductas.

Además de todo eso, hay cambios que afectan la naturaleza de la familia, como un divorcio, un cambio de domicilio, el fallecimiento de un abuelo, un nuevo hermano. Estos ajustes incitan las emociones de los niños y alteran los sentimientos en toda la familia.

Frecuentemente, no solo los niños necesitan ayuda para comprender y manejar los nuevos acontecimientos de la vida familiar y de su propio desarrollo, pero incluso los cambios más sencillos en las vidas de los padres pueden causar confusión y alteración en las vidas de sus hijos. Por ejemplo, los padres quizás no piensan que las horas extras de trabajo afectarán a sus hijos, pero esto puede crear una torrente de cambios que alteran a los niños. Quizás uno de los padres no esté para la hora de cama, o llega demasiado tarde a la cena familiar (y, mucho aprendizaje y contacto reconfortante se lleva a cabo en la cena familiar).

Indudablemente que los padres se sientan a conversar con los niños sobre estos cambios. Una lección que aprendí cuando le conté a mis niños sobre algunas "noticias", fue que,

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frecuentemente, se olvidaban de aspectos importantes de nuestra conversación o se confundían sobre detalles significativos. También les gustaba ser recordados que yo comprendía su punto de vista y sus sentimientos. Pero yo no podía seguir repitiendo lo que sucedió y por qué. Necesitaban una oportunidad de ver lo que estaba diciendo. ¿Cómo podría hacerse esto? Me di cuenta que si yo les hacía un libro, ellos podrían ver todas las partes de cada evento. Sería su propio cuento y podrían escucharlo una y otra vez.

Aunque la meta de escribir cuentos con mis hijos era para ayudarlos a anticipar los cambios de los nuevos acontecimientos y sus sentimientos sobre ellos, me di cuenta que el trabajo de hacer el cuento también me ayudaba. Tenía que pensar sobre los pensamientos de mi niño. Además,tenía que asegurarme que "adivinaba" los sentimientos de mi hijo correctamente. Esto quería decir que tenía que trabajar con mi chico para desarrollar el libro. Aprendí a escuchar y sentir los dilemas del niño sin emitir juicios.

No existe un sustituto para la comprensión y amor de los padres cuando empiecen a escribir un cuento juntos. Al trabajar con su hijo Ud. también aprende las cosas "adicionales" que Ud. podría hacer para ayudar a su chico. Finalmente, leer el cuento juntos le da una oportunidad de compartir y experimentar la calidez relacionada con este tan especial momento de cuentos. Cualquiera sea lo que traiga el destino a la vida de su familia es una experiencia compartida y una lucha compartida que ayuda a unir a los padres con los hijos.

Hacer el Libro

Cuando Ud. hace un libro con su hijo sobre una transición vital, hay algunos puntos clave que hay que tener en mente.

1. Vea la transición o desafío como una oportunidad para aprender. Un libro sobre una mudanza a otro estado podría ser así:
* Cuando nos mudemos a Tejas, encontraremos muchas cosas nuevas.
* Además Ud. puede sugerir hacer algunos dibujos sobre todas las cosas nuevas que verá la familia.

Para un nuevo curso en la escuela.
* Cuando vayas a tu nueva clase vas a conocer muchas personas nuevas.
* ¡Nuevos Profesores! ¡Nuevos niños! ¡Nuevos papás!
* Quizás nos sintamos un poco tímidos, pero podemos aprender a decir hola a los nuevos amigos.

2. Identifique el resultado positivo que Ud. quiere para su niño. A veces es el orgullo que acompaña el aprender una nueva habilidad, y el sentimiento y el logro son igualmente importante. Otras veces, la meta es poder controlar el genio, o sus inquietudes, incluso cuando algo que a uno no le gusta está pasando.

3. Este preparado de reconocer la pena y rabia que su niño puede sentir por las demandas que se le hacen.
Por ejemplo:
Juan estaba triste de despedirse de su cuna. Tenía rabia que la mamá y el papá le pidieron que se cambiara y el nuevo bebé ahora está en su vieja cuna.

Margarita tenía rabia: no le gustaba su nueva profesora. Tenía pena. Quería que la Sra. Vela estuviera en su clase también este año.

4. Las imágenes y los dibujos son parte del proceso de hacer un libro. El arte es una manera para que los niños manifiesten sus emociones.
Cuando un niño dibuja a su nueva profesora, hace un borde negro, y después cubre el dibujo con colores oscuros, uno puede imaginarse que hay un poco de estrés. Ud. puede escribir en la página al lado del dibujo, "A veces es un poco difícil tener una nueva profesora".

Todos estos puntos son partes importantes de un libro de cuentos. Si intentamos ignorar los sentimientos de rabia o tristeza de nuestros niños, los niños creerán que el cuento son buenas intenciones y lo rechazarán por falso. Si el desafío y meta del cambio no se reconoce, la oportunidad de confirmar una sensación de control se ha perdido.

Hacer un Cuento Sobre Transiciones

Para comenzar un cuento, identifique el bosquejo de que pasó o pasará. Identifique las emociones que el niño puede experimentar. Siempre recuerde: TRISTE, ENOJADO, FELIZ, ASUSTADO, y MALO. Ud. puede escribir pequeñas oraciones sobre cada uno de ellos para que su niño sepa sobre todos ellos.

Cada página que narra un hecho puede ser seguida por una página que expresa sentimientos.

Tomemos un libro sobre ir a la preescuela como ejemplo. El libro podría decir lo siguiente:

En enero, Juanito va a ir a una nueva preescuela. A veces está preocupado sobre quien va a ser su nueva profesora. Aun cuando a Ud. le gustaría que el sentimiento "desapareciera", Ud. no tiene por que darle respuestas a su niño todo el tiempo. Después de leer la página, Ud. podría decir, ¿"Qué podemos hacer para que las cosas fueran más fáciles"?

Un libro sobre un nuevo bebé podría ser así:

El nuevo bebé llegará a nuestra casa cuando todas las hojas se pongan de colores brillantes. Todo el mundo está entusiasmado de ver a quién se parecerá el nuevo bebé.

Ya que estás ayudando a tu niño con algo que sabes que pasará, simplemente escriba las etapas de las distintas cosas que su hija notará. Los cambios en el cuerpo de la mamá antes del nuevo bebé, o todas las actividades que ocurrirán antes de la mudanza a una nueva casa. Después, convérsele a su hija sobre esos cinco sentimientos. Piense de las distintas cosas

que pueden desatar cada uno de esos sentimientos. Cuando lo lean juntos, su niña lo ayudará a darse cuenta cuales son los más importantes.

Estos libros pueden parecer demasiado cortos, pero no tienen por que ser más largos que eso para un niño chico. Recuerde, el libro es solo un vehículo para ayudar a su niño comprender y enfrentar los cambios de la vida. Abre la puerta a conversaciones y discusiones que le permiten hablar con su chico sobre temas importantes. Le dará a su niño algo tangible que puede tomar, mirar, e incluso rehacer a medida que pasa el tiempo.

Hacer un Cuento Sobre una Nueva Destreza

No es muy sorprendente que un niño luche con uno o más pasos en "hacerse grande". Los preescolares tienen que manejar más nuevas etapas de desarrollo en un periodo más corto que en cualquier otro momento del ciclo vital. Incluso a los 20, 35, o incluso 60, nosotros quisiéramos tener algunas pautas sobre que nos depara la vida. Ponerse más viejo y más grande es un poco inquietante. También quiere decir que hay que sacrificar algunas cosas. La perdida y el cambio tienen como resultado sentimientos de pena, incluso cuando hay fabulosas aventuras por delante. Igual que los adultos, los niños pueden tener más que un solo sentimiento sobre cualquiera experiencia vital.

Los niños se sienten autosuficientes cuando pueden superar con éxito una nueva etapa. Una nueva habilidad, o más autocontrol puede llevar a un sentimiento de orgullo, y también aumenta la autoestima de un padre. Los niños se sienten orgullosos cuando van al baño solos, o aprenden a controlar su rabia, y los padres también.

Los padres tienen que recordar que los niños están listos para distintas etapas del desarrollo en distintos momentos. Aunque los niños tienen que renunciar a algo, como chuparse el dedo o dejar su frazada favorita, no todos los niños están listos al mismo tiempo. Los padres tienen que aceptar las señales de sus niños y comprender el ritmo de sus niños para esas etapas. A veces entre más insisten los padres, más renuente se pone el niño, pero los padres pueden amistosamente alentar esos pasos hacia delante.

El cuento que sigue fue escrito para ayudar a un niño manejar el conflicto entre su deseo de jugar en vez de aprender ir al baño. Su deseo de jugar con sus camiones está en conflicto con la necesidad de hacer pipí en el baño si es que quiere usar pantalones de "niño grande". Estos sentimientos encontrados están descritos en el libro "Yo no Quiero Ser Niño Grande."

Página 1: Me gusta mucho jugar.Me gusta jugar con mis automóviles y trenes. Me gusta jugar con mis camiones.

Pagina 2: Yo voy a la tienda con la mamá y voy a la preescuela. En ese momento me dieron mis calzoncillos de Niño Grande. A veces estoy tan ocupado que se me olvida hacer pipí y entonces me mojo.

Página 3: La mamá dice, ¿"Ese es tu baile del pipí"? La mamá dice, ¿Tienes que ir al Baño? La mamá dice, Tomás, anda al baño inmediatamente.

Página 4: A veces solo quiero jugar. A veces no me doy cuenta de mi baile del pipí. A veces me da rabia y pena cuando estoy mojado y digo: "No quiero ser niño grande".

Página 5: Me gusta ser un niño grande cuando voy a la tienda. Me gusta ser un niño grande cuando juego afuera con Alfredo solo. Soy lo suficientemente grande para atrapar una pelota. A veces cuando la mami dice "Recoge tus juguetes", me gustaría no ser grande. Es un trabajo difícil.

Página 6: A veces es difícil ser un niño grande todo el tiempo.

He aquí otro cuento sobre una transición importante: El Nuevo Trabajo de la Mami

Página 1. La mami consiguió un nuevo trabajo hoy.
Página 2. La mami dice que está muy feliz pero también un poco triste.
Página 3. La mami ahora no podrá pasar a buscarme al colegio. La mami y el papi dicen que ahora lo hará el papá. Todavía me va a dejar como siempre. Todo el mundo consigue un nuevo trabajo en esta familia!

Página 4. Voy a echar de menos ver a la mami después del colegio.
Me da pena.

Página 5. La mami y el papi dicen que lo pasaré bien con el papá cuando me pase a buscar y todos todavía cenaran juntos.

Página 6. A veces

simplemente no me gustan los cambios. La mami y el papi dicen que a veces a nadie le gusta.

Como padres esperamos poder ayudar a nuestros niños sentirse un poco menos asustados de tomar estos pasos y, cuando lo hacen, ayudarlos a sentir un sentimiento de poder, orgullo y logro. El niño puede llegar a la conclusión que este paso adelante valía la pena. Sin embargo, avanzar no debiera significar perder nuestro sentimiento de seguridad. Justo cuando nuestros niños chicos están empezando su viaje lejos de nosotros con sus primeros pasos, aun tienen que poder darse vuelta y vernos. Necesitan saber que los hinchas aun los apoyan y están listos, y en caso que se sientan flaquear un poco, a apoyarlos.

Si a sus Niños no les Gusta el Libro

A veces el niño puede enojarse con el LIBRO por plantear un tema difícil, como, por ejemplo, el divorcio de los padres, una mudanza, enfermedad o algún problema con los hermanos. El grito del niño, "No quiero saber más de ese libro estúpido", o al encontrarlo rajado en pequeños pedazos, le da al padre la oportunidad de comprender cuanto el niño odia ir al médico o odia el hecho que la mamá y el papá ya no viven juntos. Esta es realmente una oportunidad para ayudar al niño focalizar sus sentimientos de rabia o pena.

El padre que lee el libro (o que lo acaba de encontrar debajo de la ropa sucia o despedazado) puede tener empatía con el niño y decir "a nadie le gusta estar enfermo", o tener a la "mamá y el papá viviendo en distintos lugares" no tiene nada de entretenido. La reacción del niño es otra oportunidad de dialogo y reflexión. Los sentimientos del niño no se niegan ni se obstruyen.

Si el tema es puntual pero doloroso de considerar, déle más tiempo para hablar sobre sus sentimientos. Haga preguntas. Recuérdele al niño tranquilamente que Ud. sabe que el libro puede hacerlo sentirse apenado o con rabia. Entienda el hecho que es difícil hablar sobre estossentimientos. Recuérdele a su niño que es una tarea que tienen que hacer juntos. Tenga paciencia. Para los temas difíciles, los niños quizás necesiten más apoyo y estar más cómodos para poder tocar estos temas tan cargados de emociones.

Si el niño rechaza el libro, tranquilamente comuníquele la idea que este libro es sobre algo triste, que da rabia, o asusta. "Yo se que este libro te hace sentir mal. Yo también me siento mal pero nos podemos sentar juntos a conversar sobre el tema". Entre más Ud. puede decirle al niño que Ud. puede tolerar y aceptar estos sentimientos difíciles, más fácil será para el niño compartir esos sentimientos, Poco a poco, el niño empezará a aceptar las distintas páginas del libro.

Recuerde, incluso si su niño decide que no quiere leer el libro, o una parte del libro, Ud. todavía puede hablar sobre los cambios y sus sentimientos. Uds. pueden hacer un cuento nuevo. O su niño quizás quiera dictarle un cuento fantástico que es lo opuesto a lo que va a suceder. Entienda que su niño necesita espacio. Su primer libro de cuentos puede esperar a que vuelva un poco más tarde.

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Having Fun With Math

You're in the store and the cashier has just handed you your change. Glancing down, you quickly do the math to make sure you've been given the correct amount.

Dinner is over and you're about to serve a special dessert -- an apple crumb pie. There's six people and you want to give everyone an equal piece.

You and your youngster have been outside listening to the birds. It seems to you that the birds sing more at some times of the day than at other times. You want to know if there really is a difference, or if you are just outside at those times to hear birds sing.

Math is all around us, and all around our children. We know it's important to prepare our children to learn to math, but it's also important for them to develop an appreciation (and love) for math.

Process

Math has two parts: process and content. The process (thinking math) is the ability to reason. It involves, in part, logically solving problems, and seeing connections between events and information.

We start with a question, or a situation that needs to be resolved. It could be mathematical, but not necessarily. Problem solving involves logical thinking, seeing the possibilities, deciding how to test them, and then determining which one works the best. Fitting groceries into the cabinet, or suitcases into the trunk of the car involves problem solving. So does working out a plan to see what time of day the birds do most of their singing.

Watch the letter carrier delivering the mail. Does she go back and forth across the street, or down one block and up the other? Why? Ask your youngster which solution involves the least amount of walking. You can even draw the street and the houses on a sheet of paper then determine which would be better by using a ruler to measure and compare the amount of walking.

Content

When we think of math, though, we usually think of the content part – the counting, fractions, geometry, and more.

¤ Number Sense

Feeling comfortable with numbers is certainly part of math. It begins with being able to count but number sense encompasses far more. Children learn that counting tells them how many cookies they have, and that four cookies is certainly more than two cookies. In fact, it is twice more than two.

Although these concepts seem obvious to adults, they are not easy for preschoolers. Very young children don't have the idea of one-to-one correspondence. This means that they don't understand that counting can tell them how many pennies they have. Instead, they'll happily call out numbers at random and then announce an answer.

From ages two to about four years children gradually become more sophisticated in their understanding of the sequence of number words (the order is: one,

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two, three; not one, three, two). Their ability to use these words to count objects also increases, and they realize that counting can tell them the true answer to "how many."

Eventually children realize that if they have three pieces of candy and someone gives them two more, they now have five pieces. Or that if they have five pieces, and give away two of them, they have three pieces left.

Helping your child become familiar and comfortable with numbers is easy. Take a lesson from the Count on Sesame Street and count everything. While you are at it, help your children learn how to count accurately. If there is a group of objects, separate them and then count from left to right, or top to bottom. Encourage your child to put her finger on each item as she counts it.

Encourage one-to-one correspondence in every-day activities. Ask your child to give one cup to everyone at the table. Give him one sock for each foot. Count one hat for each head.

⌑ Geometry and Spatial Relationships

Although geometry and spatial relationships aren't ideas you'd think to teach your preschooler, geometry starts with shapes, direction, and movement. Geometry is the round blocks your child struggles to push through a square hole until you gently help her see the corners. It's the changes in the angle of the sun as it slowly sets, and the way buildings and trees get taller as we get closer. Geometry is words like *up* and *down*, *bigger* and *smaller*.

Puzzles are wonderful for helping children see differences in shapes. All kids enjoy watching square sandwiches become triangles when cut on the diagonal. Sitting in waiting rooms, or in restaurants, look around with your youngster and see the shapes near you. Can your child find squares, triangles?

⌑ Measurement

Measuring is also part of both math and daily life. Temperature is measured in degrees. Baking requires measurements in cups and teaspoons. How far is something? Miles away? Or inches from your nose? When you drive in the car, or take the bus somewhere, how long will the trip take? Hours? Minutes? Is it longer than the last trip? Why?

⌑ Fractions

Out of measurement grows an understanding of fractions. A playmate lives six blocks away. When you've walked three blocks you're halfway there. A tuna sandwich cut in quarters -- that's more fractions. Anything and everything can be cut into pieces – time, distance, food, and it all involves fractions.

⌑ Patterns and Relationships

Oddly enough, math is also involved in music, and designs on wallpaper. These are patterns: things that repeat. Patterns are important because they help children understand the underlying structure of things. It allows them to feel confident about what will happen next, even when they can't yet see it. Red-blue-green. Red-blue-green. Red-blue-green. Red-blue-??? Green!

Watching the sun rising and setting and seeing the seasons change show us the patterns in nature. Summer-Fall-Winter-Spring.

If math is all around us, and it is, then we can't help but put math into our children's lives, and prepare them not only to count, but to reason their way through problems and come up with solutions.

Activities

Here are some ways to highlight every-day math. They'll also help make daily activities more fun for you and your youngster.

- Ask your children to estimate how many spoonfuls it will take to finish their cereal. Count each spoonful as they eat. This playful way of eating breakfast can be a fun way for toddlers to practice counting. If you repeat this activity over time your youngster will also get practice in predicting and become better and better at it.
- Put a thermometer on the window and notice the temperature every morning. Ask your child how it feels when the temperature is lower and when the temperature is higher. What's the relationship between how the air feels outside and the numbers on the thermometer? When it's warm outside what does the thermometer say? What about when it's cold? Is there a difference between the afternoon and evening?
- Teach your child the names of the different shapes. Traffic signs are a good place to start. Count how many sides each one has. Ask how the signs are different. Count the number of one kind of traffic sign as you ride on the bus or on the train. Next trip, count a different kind of sign. Which do you see more often?
- Tell your children how many minutes dinner needs to cook. Boiling pasta, baking potatoes, casseroles, and cakes are all good examples. Close to the end, encourage them to watch the final minutes count down on the timer, and count the last ones together.
- Cook together, especially measuring ingredients. Not only will children learn about amounts, but they will also learn about the order in which things need to be done.
- Use mealtime to understand the relationships between shapes. Cut your children's sandwich diagonally to make two triangles, or up and down to make two rectangles, or into four squares. Ask your children to name the shape and put them back together.
- Keep a calendar. This helps children learn the days of the week. It also

shows repeating patterns. If today is Monday, tomorrow will be Tuesday.

• You can make a special mark for the weather – sunshine, rain, snow. At the end of the month count each notation. How many days did it rain? Snow? Was the sun out? You can even compare weeks and see which was the rainiest.

• Collect a number of objects of various sizes and shapes. Ask your child to choose two items with something in common. As he matches items, ask him to tell you the characteristics that they have in common. Are the objects all the same color? Shape? Made of the same material? This helps children learn to classify things and find relationships. You can set the level of difficulty by the items you choose. To make it simple select two balls. They will be the same shape. Two shoes of a pair will be the same color.

You know what? Math really can be fun!

Some of the information for this article and many of these activities have been adapted from: Early Childhood: Where Learning Begins · Mathematics · Mathematical activities for parents and their 2 - 5 year-old children by Carol Sue Fromboluti, Natalie Rinck, edited by Diane Magarity. Published by the U S Department of Education · Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

If you would like a copy of this report write: U S Department of Education; ED Pubs; P.O. Box 1398; Jessup, MD 20794; or call (tollfree) 1-877-4ED-PUBS

How Children Think

You may have noticed that your child doesn't quite think like an adult. You may even find it fascinating to talk to your youngster and learn how she reasons about the world. The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget developed his theory of children's cognitive development by watching his own children solve little problems he devised for them. In fact, Piaget developed one of the most influential theories of children's mental development and how their thinking and reasoning change.

Here are two mini-experiments based on Piaget that you can do with your own children.

Separate 20 pennies into two groups of 10. Line the first group of 10 up exactly with the second group, penny for penny. Ask your youngster which line has more pennies, or do both lines have the same number of pennies. She'll probably say that they both have the same number. Now, space the pennies out in one row, compared to the other row. Ask the child which row has more pennies, or do both rows have the same number. Your child will probably tell you that the longer row has more pennies.

Children below about seven years of age generally believe that the number of pennies must be greater when the row is longer. Now, count the pennies in one row and then the other and demonstrate the number is the same. Don't be surprised if your child still believes the longer row has more pennies.

Piaget called this conservation of number: the ability to understand that the number of objects stays the same, regardless of their arrangement. Young children generally just don't believe that's the case. For them, quantity depends on arrangement.

A similar idea is the conservation of substance. The quantity is the same, regardless of its form. The classic demonstration of this concept used two balls of clay, one of which is rolled out long and thin as the child watches. Asked which has more clay, or do both have the same, most youngsters pick one as having more clay either because it is longer, or taller. But there's another version that parents can do at home – something that might whimsically be called conservation of cookie. Take two large cookies. While your child watches, break one cookie into four parts. Ask your youngster to pick which she wants the whole cookie or the one broken into pieces. A child who wants "more cookies" will generally pick the four small cookie pieces. Doesn't she now have more cookies? At some point, children will catch on and you won't be able to use this any more, but it will also show that your youngster has made a large cognitive leap forward.

Someone Expecting A Baby?

If someone you know is expecting a baby, consider giving them a subscription to *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*. This gift will be treasured and used. As it arrives each month it will remind the receiver of how much you care.

Just send the name, address, and your payment to *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*, North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center; 480 Old Westbury Road; Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215. An English subscription is $32 per year and the English/Spanish Edition is $52 per year. We will send a gift card to your designee.

RESEARCH NEWS

Early Childhood Intervention Encourages Academic Achievement

Children who participated in a comprehensive preschool program had higher rates of high school completion, and lower rates of juvenile arrest, according to a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* published in May, 2001.

The study, led by Arthur J. Reynolds, PhD of the Waisman Center on Mental Retardation and Human Development, University of Wisconsin-Madison, also found that children with more extensive participation from preschool through second or third grade had lower rates of grade retention and special education.

This study was conducted in 25 sites in Chicago, Illinois of the Chicago-Child-Parent Center Program. The program included a structured set of learning activities, low child to teacher ratios in preschool and kindergarten, and a parenting program that encouraged workshops, reading groups, volunteering in the classroom and completing high school. Health services were also provided, including screenings, speech therapy, nursing and meal services. In addition to the preschool program, children could participate in a kindergarten program, as well as receive services from ages 6 through 9 years.

Researchers looked at whether the students completed high school, highest grade completed, arrest records and kind of offense (violent or nonviolent). Data on grade retention and number of years receiving special education services was also collected.

Children who participated in the preschool program had a significantly higher rate of high school completion and a lower rate of school drop out.

Turning to arrest records, preschool participation was associated with significantly lower rates and number of juvenile arrests and less arrests for violent crimes. With regard to special education services, again, preschool participation was associated with significantly lower rates of grade retention and special education placement, spending fewer years in special education. Extended participation into elementary school also conferred a benefit.

Reynolds and his colleagues concluded that "Participation in an established early childhood intervention for low-income children was associated with better educational and social outcomes up to age 20 years."

Long-term Effects of an Early Childhood Intervention on Educational Achievement and Juvenile Arrest: A 15-year follow-up of low-income children in public schools, Arthur J. Reynolds, PhD, Judy A. Temple, PhD, Dylan L Robertson, Emily A. Mann, MSSW, May 9, 2001, Vol 285 (18) 2339-2346.

What Does It Mean? Basically, it shows that well-designed, comprehensive preschool interventions work. They encourage academic achievement and reduce arrests.

There has been some controversy over their effectiveness from those who expect these programs to inoculate children against later adverse experiences in schools and in the neighborhoods. However, Edward Zigler, PhD and Sally Styfco point out in their editorial comment on the study, "Just as 1 year of good nutrition is not expected to make a child healthy for life, it is foolish to assume that any brief intervention will lead to academic success and a good-paying job."

"The results indicate," writes Zigler and Styfco, "that health and quality educational services, delivered in a venue that involves parents and strengthens families, can improve developmental outcomes among poor children." And when children benefit, so does society.

Neala Schwartzberg, PhD.

Dear Reader ...

Math is fun – at least it can be. We all know math is useful and practical but this month, we think we've made it exciting, for both parent and child.

You'll also enjoy a glimpse into your youngster's mind by recreating some of the situations the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget devised in his own research. Once, years ago, when confronted by my preschool son who wasn't satisfied with one cookie, I remembered what I had learned from Piaget's research. As my son watched, I broke the cookie up into a few pieces. "Here's more cookies," I said as I gave them to my youngster. He looked at me, then looked at the cookie bits with a puzzled expression. Something wasn't quite right, but he certainly saw more cookies. And that (at least for that moment) was enough.

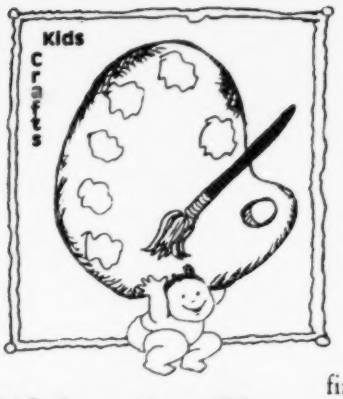
Don't forget the books in the Library Resources. We've chosen books that can add to your child's math pleasure.

Autumn comes indoors with the innovative crafts of Dawn Barhyte. We haven't forgotten about Halloween. Books, and activities add to the gentle spookiness. Fingerprints have never been so versatile.

A while back we sent out flyers on our new *Tell a Friend Program*. We hope you'll take advantage of it. For each friend who subscribes to *P&p* we'll add 4 months on to your subscription. Everyone benefits!

Enjoy the season and *Parent & preschooler*.

Neala Schwartzberg



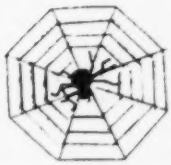
Kids Crafts

When the weather cools off and the sun sets earlier, we spend more time indoors. It's difficult to keep preschoolers busy so this harvest of fall activities is bound to enchant.

Preschoolers are very capable crafters and they can have fun experimenting with materials. Doing crafts enhances your children's ability to plan and realize the power of their growing minds. Creativity is an essential part of early development.

Keep in mind it's the mastering of the materials, and seeing what a child can do that is critical. Resist the impulse to "fix" your child's project. This can discourage your child from developing the creative initiative that is part of healthy self expression.

Simple Seasonal Tree
You will need: Large white paper; Red, yellow, orange and brown finger-paint; Pencil. Why not make a tree chock full of eye-catching autumn leaves? This clever craft can serve as a showpiece throughout the season. First have your child trace his forearm and hand with fingers spread apart. His forearm will make the trunk of the tree and his fingers will be the branches. Then using the brown paint, color the tree. Dip fingers into the red, yellow and orange paints and print with fingertips to form leaves for the branches. While working discuss why some leaves turn colors in the fall.



Silly Spaghetti Cobwebs
You will need: Cold cooked spaghetti; White glue; Waxed paper; Plastic spider. This novel activity is sure to be a hit with your youngster. Have your child dip the spaghetti in the glue and arrange into a web like design on the wax paper. When the pasta dries peel the spider "web" off the wax paper. Add an inexpensive plastic spider to complete the Halloween motif.

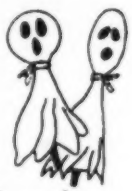
Autumn Placemat Stationary
You will need: Glue; Construction paper; Clear contact paper; Assorted Leaves; Tempera paint in red, yellow and orange. With autumn here your child is bound to want to play with the colorful leaves. Begin by encouraging your child to collect as many different kinds of leaves as he can find. Then direct your child to gently paint each leaf with his choice of color. You can make a game of it and see if your child can match the color paint to the color of the leaf or even come up with some kooky autumn colors.

After painting a leaf have your child use it as a "printer" and press the still wet-with-paint leaf on the paper. A kaleidoscope of leaves will materialize.

Let dry several hours and then laminate with the clear contact paper. Watch your child's face light up every time she sits down to a meal and realizes "I did it myself." For variation on this craft make homemade stationary using the leaves as printers too.

Nature Pal
You will need: Leaves; Pine cones; Seeds; Sticks; Acorns; Dried grass or flowers; Pumpkins, gourds or both; Glue; Black marker. If your child is too young to carve pumpkins this activity offers a fun alternative. Take a rambling hike outdoors. Encourage your child to find as many natural materials as she can find. You can gently suggest additional materials. While collecting materials talk about the different textures. Ask your child to describe how they feel.

Bring nature's bounty indoors and you are ready to begin sculpting an autumn Nature Pal. Have your child imagine how she wants her "face" to look. This planning is good practice and develops thinking skills. Using the black marker your child can even sketch the face onto the gourd or pumpkin, planning where the different materials will go. For the next step start gluing the natural materials onto the pumpkin or gourds. This unique composition can be a charming display throughout the season.



Lollipop Ghosts
You will need: Lollipops; White tissue; Pipe cleaners; Black marker. This irresistible Halloween treat is bound to delight. Begin by cutting the pipe cleaners in half. You may want to assist with this step as your child may have some difficulty. Then take the tissue and drape it over the lollipop. Have your child fasten it in place by tightening the pipe cleaner around the edges. Next have your child add a face to the ghost. Encourage him to be inventive. If you decide to make more than one (your child will want to) they can range from truly spooky to the silliest of faces. Let your kids have fun with them.

Dawn Barbyte

Did You Know?

Celebrated in Italy, Latin America, Mexico, the United States, and most Spanish-speaking nations on the second Monday in October, Columbus Day honors the birthday of the famous Italian explorer. During his lifetime, Columbus was not venerated and was largely unknown. He died in 1506 poverty-stricken and with his achievements forgotten. The celebration of his accomplishments began in 1792 on the 300th anniversary of his first voyage.

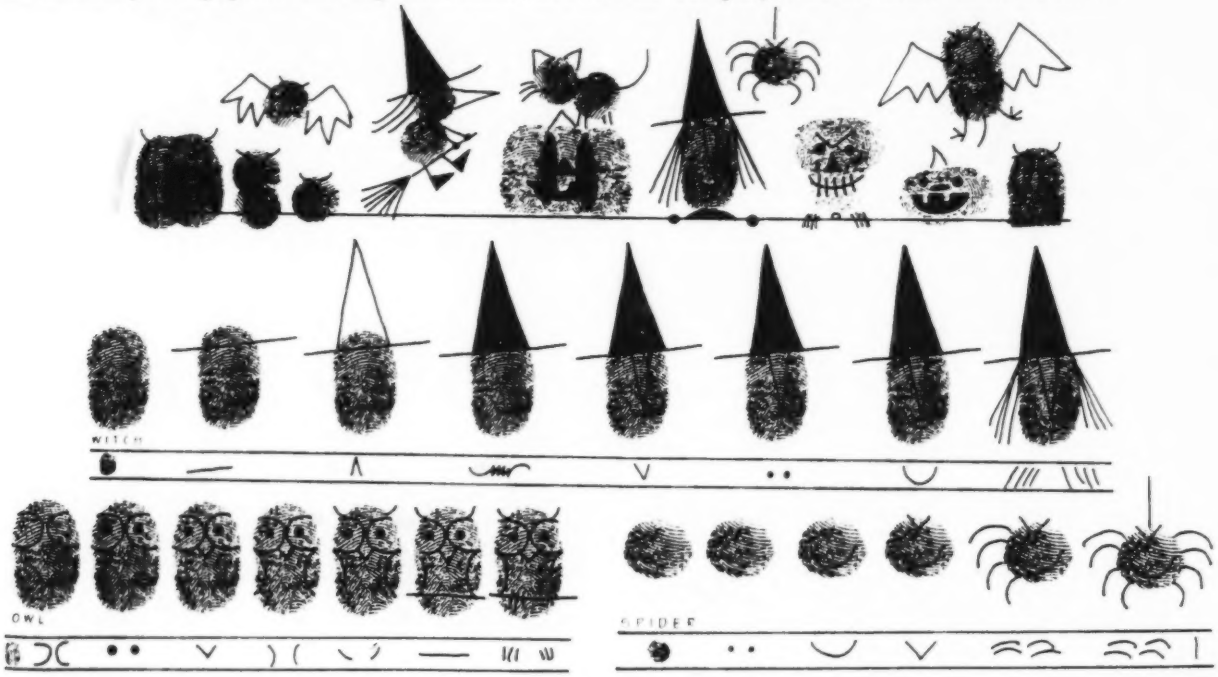
Holiday Symbols by Sue Ellen Thompson; Omnigraphics; Detroit, Mi.; 2000.

A Halloween (and Other Times, Too) Treat

Once in a while we come across a special book. It can appeal to us because it is beautifully written, or has gorgeous illustrations, or a touching story. But sometimes we like a book because it's clever and creative.

Ed Emberley's Fingerprint Drawing Book by Ed Emberley made us want to go out and get a stamp pad and start playing. Basically, the book shows you how to make pictures using your fingerprints and a couple of dots and squiggles. Although the book includes instructions on all kinds of objects from the garden, the pond, animals, it also includes seasonal fun. Since it's October and with permission of the publisher, here are some Halloween fingerprint creations your children can make with a pen, a stamp pad, and their fingers. Enjoy!

📖 ***Ed Emberley's Fingerprint Drawing Book***; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; 2000; Hardcover, $15.95.



Halloween BOOks

📖 ***Eek-A-Boo! A spooky lift-the-flap book*** by Joan Holub; Cartwheel Books - Scholastic; New York; 2000; Softcover $6.95. A gentle and non-scary book for little ones who can see smiling pumpkins and spiders spinning webs. Even the skeletons seem friendly as they tap dance with a top hat. A warm and humorous book for the very young and great fun for parents to read to their children on those first Halloween nights.

📖 ***Jungle Halloween*** by Maryann Cocca-Leffler, Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL; 2000; Hardcover. The jungle animals are preparing for Halloween. The elephant is sewing a costume, the monkey is carving a pumpkin, and the tiger is blowing up balloons. Everyone in the jungle enjoys the party. This book is fun and parents can use it as a springboard to discuss the many Halloween traditions and customs.

📖 ***Pumpkin Jack*** by Will Hubbell; Albert Whitman & Company; Morton Grove, IL; 2000; Hardcover. Tim carved a pumpkin and named him Jack. Eventually, Jack began to rot and Tim moved him to the garden "which was filled with the brown ghosts of last summer's plants." In spring, Tim found a tiny sprout where Jack had been. He tended the plant and in the fall he carved a pumpkin and welcomed back his friend Jack.

📖 ***Sheep Trick or Treat*** by Nancy Shaw; illustrated by Margot Apple; Houghton Mifflin Company; Boston; 1997; Softcover, $4.95. In this whimsical book the sheep create their costumes, none of which actually disguise them. Nonetheless they trick-or-treat at the farm then parade back home. On the way they come across the foxes, also dressed for Halloween. Everyone runs away and the sheep go home to enjoy their treats.

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Halloween Should Be a Time for "Boo" not for Boo-Hoo

When your preschooler approaches trick or treat

For weeks and weeks your preschooler has been hearing the big kids talk about Halloween. He has heard all of the scary stories and all of the fun stories as well. Now, as the big night approaches, he may suddenly decide that he not only doesn't want to have anything to do with this confusing holiday, he doesn't even want to talk about getting a costume for the nursery school trick-or-treat parade.

This is a pretty common occurrence for preschoolers who are still developmentally apprehensive about the unknown. During the early childhood years, the lines between real and make-believe are blurred. That is the reason kids love to see Barney on television but are overwhelmed when they see a six foot tall Barney in person at a supermarket opening. The reality of dark streets and older kids dressed in very gruesome costumes may just be too much for your little one. Every child has temperament traits (see P&pN March-2001 V.16 N.3) that will help parents decide just how much excitement they will be able to handle at each developmental stage. So on Halloween, parents need to "read" their child and help them get the fun out of the holiday without the true fright. Just remember that the ages between one year and five years are the peak developmental stages when children can be afraid of just about everything from pumpkins lit with flickering candles to their older brother dressed up as "Freddie Kruger." How can parents help their children enjoy Halloween? Here are some things to think about:

✦ If he doesn't want to go trick or treating - let him stay home. He can help you hand out the treats to those who come to your door. This way he can get used to the costumes while feeling safe at home.

✦ If she wants to wear a costume. Help her to make her own. This will take the "mystery" out of the costume and teach her how to use make-believe for play. But remember, don't force her to wear it when it's finished. Letting her play with the costume in advance of Halloween might help her prepare for the big day.

✦ Talk about monsters and ghosts with your child. Make sure that you let her express her ideas and fears and teach her that all of this "monster stuff" is just pretend and harmless.

✦ If he truly wants to trick or treat but you sense that he is still afraid, limit his forays to a few selected houses, visited before it gets dark, and let him carry a flashlight as he walks along holding your hand.

✦ Avoid scary activities, there's just no point in subjecting your five year old to scary movies or stories. Once he is thoroughly spooked, it's hard to take it back and explain that it was all fake and just for fun.

✦ And remember, safety is just good sense. Preschoolers must never, never, trick or treat alone or just accompanied by older kids. You must also be sure that your preschooler's costume fits well, is not too long or too loose. And, first and foremost, be sure that all costumes are flame-retardant.

A very young child might not understand that make-believe can't hurt you so it's up to parents to help children savor the fun of Halloween. The creepy, eerie feelings can just wait until they get a little older and a little wiser.

Jane E. Meckwood-Yazdpour

Costumes

Trick-or-treaters are apt to use costumes that reflect their culture's most prevalent issue. During the depression hobos were the favored costume. In the 1950's soldiers were "in." In the 1980's kids opted for movie stars and today the favorite costumes are superheros.

Witches, ghosts, goblins, and skeletons are always popular because they represent a kind of triumph over the fear of evil and death.

The Jack-O-Lantern

In Ireland, Scotland, and England people often see a pale, eerie light moving over bogs and marshes. Today we know that this phenomenon is simply marsh gas given off by rotting plant and animal life. As the gas drifts on the wind, the light does resemble a lantern moving along in someone's hand. This light came to be called "Lantern Men", "Hob-O-Lantern", or "Jack-O-Lantern."

Jack-O-Lantern became a legendary folk figure whom people believed could ward off evil spirits.

The Jack-O-Lanterns we know today were originally made from turnips in Scotland. In Ireland they used potatoes and in England they used "punkies" or large beets. They would scoop out the flesh from the vegetable, carve a scary face on it and light it with a candle on the inside. These "faces" would be placed in all of the windows and doorways of the house on All Hallows Eve (our Halloween night). They hoped that the marauding spirits, abroad in the world that night, would be frightened and then pass their house by.

This custom came with the Scottish and Irish immigration to the United States. Once they saw the many pumpkins available in the new world, they recognized them as ideal for a Jack-O-Lantern. Thus, the carved pumpkin became a new tradition. As other Americans saw these candlelit pumpkins on porches every Halloween, they slowly adopted the custom until it, along with ghosts and goblins, became one of the classic American Halloween symbols. So the next time you see a Halloween Jack-O-Lantern, be glad, it could have been a turnip or a potato!

Holiday Symbols; by Sue Ellen Thompson; Omnigraphics; Detroit, Mi.; 2000

Library Resources

Math Books
Shapes and Concepts

📖 ***Eye Spy Shapes*** by Debbie MacKinnon; photographs by Anthea Sieveking; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA; 2000; Hardcover $8.95. A nicely done, basic book of shapes with lots of examples. The photos show children paddling in a circular pool, building with square blocks, and more. One activity per shape.

📖 ***Snow Shapes*** by Judith Moffatt; Scholastic Inc/Cartwheel Books; New York; 2000; Softcover $3.99. A fun book in which children follow directions to make snowflakes, birds, squirrels and more. For older preschoolers or with parent assistance.

📖 ***Too Big, Too Small, Just Right*** by Frances Minters; illustrated by Janie Bynum, Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA; 2001; Hardcover $13.00. Two bunnies illustrate the concept of opposites such as size (too big, too small, and just right), height, brightness, weight, and more as they go through their activities. Cheerful and engaging depiction of the important concepts.

📖 ***Whose Socks are Those?*** by Jez Alborough; Candlewick Press; Cambridge, MA; 1999; Softcover $3.99. "Whose socks are those hanging on the clothesline? asked the elephant." The socks are very long and very thin. Lift the flap and the answer is "They're mine said the flamingo." A nice way to introduce the idea of matching aspects of the pieces of clothing to the size and shape of the animals.

Collections

📖 ***Hannah's Collections*** by Marthe Jocelyn, Dutton Children's Books; New York, 2000 hardcover, $14.99. Hannah's teacher announces that the children can bring in a collection to share with the class. Hannah wants to bring something to school, but what? She has buttons, Popsicle sticks, barrettes and more. The book uses clever collages to illustrate the concept of object classification. Finally Hanah decides to use everything in a sculpture and bring that to school.

Counting

📖 ***Five Creatures*** by Emily Jenkins; pictures by Tomek Bogacki; Frances Foster Books/Farrar Straus Giroux; New York; 2001; Hardcover $16.00. How many ways can you divide a household of five? A lot, according to this creative book. You can count the humans and the felines, the short ones and the tall ones. Youngsters will be intrigued by the ways we can understand and categorize. How many ways can you group the living creatures in your household?

📖 ***One Hungry Monster*** by Susan Heyboer O'Keefe; illustrated by Lynn Munsinger; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; Boardbook $5.95. Clever rhymes and Munsinger's wonderful illustrations combine to form a charming counting book. "One hungry monster underneath my bed, moaning and groaning and begging to be fed." Eventually there are 10 hungry monsters and the little boy starts to bring out vast quantities of food for them.

📖 ***Steven Kellogg's Frogs Jump*** by Alan Brooks; Scholastic, Inc. New York; 1999; Softcover, $6.99. A cleverly done counting book with one jumping frog, two ducks diving, and the frog who seems to eat up everything at the end.

📖 ***Twenty is Too Many*** by Kate Duke; Dutton Children's Books; New York; 2000; Hardcover $15.99. The guinea pigs are back, this time crowded into a tiny boat. Whimsical illustrations depict the little guys diving and ballooning off the boat. Once on land, they get into all kinds of mischief. But it's all great fun.

Daily Skills

📖 ***The Coin Counting Book*** by Rozanne Lanczak; Charlesbridge Publishing; Watertown, MA; 2001; Softcover, $6.95. Through photos the book takes the reader from pennies to nickels, dimes, quarters, all the way up to a dollar. Children should have a good appreciation for counting before using this book. Or, it can be introduced a little at a time as the child's ability to count grows.

📖 ***What Time Is It?*** by Sheila Keenan; illustrated by K.A. Jacobs; Scholastic, Inc.\ Cartwheel Books; New York; 1999; Softcover, $3.99. Filled with riddles about telling time such as: "One is too early. Three is too late. If you come in between, that would be great! What time is it?" For additional help, the illustration contains a clock with the hands at 12 and 2. Other illustrations show a digital clock. Some of the riddles require basic math.

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

A monthly exploration of early childhood topics from The Lindner Early Childhood Training Institute

Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award

En Español

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Divirtiéndose con las Matemáticas

Estás en la tienda y el cajero acaba de darte el vuelto. Mientras miras hacia abajo, rápidamente haces las matemáticas para asegurarte que te han dado la cantidad correcta.

Ha terminado la cena y estás a punto de servir un postre especial –un pastel de manzanas. Hay seis personas y quieres darle a todo el mundo una tajada similar.

Tu y tu hijo están al aire libre escuchando el cantar de los pajaritos. Te da la impresión que los pajaritos cantan más a ciertas horas del día que en otras. Quieres saber si realmente hay una diferencia, o si simplemente estás afuera en esos momentos para escuchar cantar a los pájaros.

Las matemáticas nos rodean y rodean a nuestros niños. Sabemos que es importante preparar a nuestros niños a aprender matemáticas, pero también es importante que ellos desarrollen un aprecio (y

amor) por las matemáticas.

Proceso

Las matemáticas tienen dos partes –proceso contenido. El proceso –pensar matemáticamente- es la capacidad de razonar. Involucra, en parte, resolver problemas lógicamente, y captar los vínculos entre eventos e información.

Empezamos con una pregunta, o una situación que tiene que ser resuelta. Podría ser matemática, pero no necesariamente. Resolver problemas involucra pensar lógicamente, ver las posibilidades, decidir como probarlas y después determinar cual funciona mejor. Hacer caber las bolsas del supermercado en la maleta del automóvil involucra resolver problemas. También formular un plan para averiguar a qué hora del día cantan más los pajaritos.

Observe al cartero distribuir la correspondencia. ¿Ella cruza la calle constantemente, o va primero por un lado y después por el otro? ¿Por qué? Pregúntele a su hijo que solución implica tener que caminar menos. Incluso puedes dibujar la calle y las casas en una hoja de papel y después determinar que sería mejor usando una regla para medir y comparar la cantidad que tiene que caminar.

Contenido

Sin embargo, cuando pensamos sobre las matemáticas generalmente pensamos sobre la parte contenido –contar, fracciones, geometría, y otras cosas.

Sentido de Números

Sentirse cómodo con los números es, ciertamente, parte de las matemáticas.

Comienza con la capacidad de contar pero el sentido de números implica mucho más. Los niños aprenden que contar les dice cuantas galletas tienen, y que cuatro galletas es ciertamente mas que dos galletas. ¡Efectivamente, es dos veces más que dos!

Aunque estos conceptos son evidentes para los adultos, no son fáciles para los niños preescolares. Los niños muy pequeños no tienen la idea de una equivalencia de uno a uno. Esto quiere decir que no comprenden que contar les puede decir cuantos pesos tienen. Lo que hacen es recitar números al azar y después anuncian una respuesta.

De las edades de dos a aproximadamente cuatro años los niños paulatinamente se ponen más sofisticados en su comprensión de la secuencia de palabras números (el orden es: uno, dos, tres; no uno, tres, dos). Su habilidad de usar estas palabras para contar objetos también aumenta, y se dan cuenta que contar les puede dar la respuesta correcta a "cuantos".

Eventualmente los niños se dan cuenta que si tienen tres dulces y si alguien les da dos más, ahora tienen cinco dulces. O si tienen cinco dulces y regalan dos, les quedan tres dulces.

Ayudar a su niño a familiarizarse y sentirse cómodo con los números es fácil. Tome una lección del Conde en la Plaza Sésamo y cuente todo. Mientras tanto, ayude a sus niños a contar con precisión. Si hay un grupo de objetos, sepárelos y después cuente de izquierda a derecha, o de arriba abajo. Aliente a su niño a que ponga su dedo en cada objeto a medida que los cuenta.

Aliente equivalencias uno a uno en las actividades cotidianas. Pídale a su niño que le de una taza a todos los que están en la mesa. Déle un calcetín para cada pie. Cuente un gorro para cada cabeza.

La Geometría y las Relaciones Espaciales

Aunque la geometría y las relaciones espaciales no son ideas que pensarías enseñarles a su preescolar, la geometría comienza con formas dirección y movimiento. La geometría son las piezas redondas que tu niño intenta poner en el espacio cuadrado hasta que lo ayudas cariñosamente a ver los bordes. Son los cambios en el ángulo del sol a medida que se lentamente se pone, y la manera en que los edificios y árboles se ponen más altos a medida que nos acercamos. La geometría son palabras como arriba y abajo, más grande y más chico. Los rompecabezas son maravillosos para ayudar a los niños ver las diferencias en las formas. Todos los niños gozan al ver sándwiches convertirse en triángulos cuando se los corta diagonalmente. Al estar sentados en salas de esperas o en restaurantes, mire su entorno con su hijo y vea las formas a su alrededor. Su niño puede encontrar los cuadrados y los triángulos?

Medir

Medir también es parte de la matemáticas y de la vida cotidiana. La temperatura se mide en grados. Hacer una torta en el horno requiere mediciones en tazas y cucharadas. ¿A qué distancia está algo? ¿A kilómetros o a centímetros de su nariz? Cuando viajas en auto o tomas el bus para ir a algún lugar, ¿cuanto se va a demorar el viaje? Horas? ¿Minutos? ¿Más que el ultimo viaje? ¿Por qué?

Fracciones

De las mediciones nace una comprensión de las fracciones. Un amigo vive a seis cuadras. Cuando has caminado tres cuadras estás a mitad de camino. Un sándwich de atún es cortado en cuartos –eso es fracciones. Cualquier cosa y todo puede ser cortado en pedazos –el tiempo, distancias, alimentos, y todo involucra fracciones.

Patrones y Correlaciones

Curiosamente, las matemáticas también están involucradas en la música y en los diseños del papel mural. Estos son los patrones --cosas que se repiten. Los patrones son importantes porque ayudan a los niños a comprender la estructura subyacente de las cosas. Les permite sentirse confiados sobre que pasará después, incluso cuando todavía no lo pueden ver. Rojo-azul-verde. Rojo-azul-verde. Rojo-azul-verde. Rojo-azul-??? ¡Verde!

Observar el sol que sale y se pone y mirar como cambian las estaciones nos muestran los patrones de la naturaleza. Verano-Otoño-Invierno-Primavera.

Si las matemáticas están en todas partes, y lo están, entonces tenemos que poner las matemáticas en las vidas de nuestros niños, y no solo prepararlos a contar, sino a razonar los problemas y a plantear soluciones.

Actividades

He aquí algunas maneras de resaltar las matemáticas cotidianas. También ayudan a hacer las actividades cotidianas más entretenidas para ti. y tu niño.

Pídale a su niño a calcular cuantas cucharadas faltan para terminar su cereal de desayuno. Cuente cada cucharada a medida que comen. Esta manera juguetona de tomar el desayuno puede ser una manera entretenida para los niños pequeños practiquen contar. Si repites esta actividad varias veces sus hijos también obtendrán practica en predecir y serán cada día mejores.

Ponga un termómetro en la ventana y observe la temperatura todas las mañanas. Pregúntele a su niño que se siente cuando la temperatura está más baja y cuando está más alta. ¿Cual es la relación entre como se siente el aire afuera y los números en el termómetro? ¿Cuando está tibio afuera, qué dice el termómetro? ¿Y cuando está helado? ¿Existen diferencias entre la tarde y el anochecer?

Enséñele a su niño los

nombre de las distintas formas. Los letreros del transito son un buen punto de partida. Cuente cuanto lados tiene cada uno. Pregunte como los letreros son distintos. Cuente la cantidad de un tipo de letrero del transito a medida que viaja en un autobús o en tren. En el próximo viaje cuente un tipo de letrero distinto. ¿Cual se ve más a menudo?

Cuéntele a sus niños cuanto minutos se necesitan para cocinar la cena. Hervir la pasta, asar las papas, budines, y pasteles son buenos ejemplo. Cuando esté casi lista, aliéntelos a observar los últimos minutos en el reloj y cuenten los últimos segundos juntos.

Cocinen juntos, especialmente midiendo los ingredientes. Los niños no solo aprenderán sobre cantidades, sino que también aprenderán sobre el orden en que hay que hacer las cosas.

Use la hora de comer para comprender las relaciones entre las formas. Corte el sándwich de su niño diagonalmente para hacer dos triángulos, o de arriba hacia abajo para hacer dos rectángulos o en cuatro cuadrados. Pídale a sus niños que nombren la forma y que experimenten para armarlo otra vez.

Mantenga un calendario. Esto ayuda a los niños a aprender los nombres de los días de la semana. También demuestra patrones recurrentes. Si hoy es lunes, mañana será martes.

Puede hacer una marca especial para el tiempo – sol, lluvia, nieve. Al fin de mes cuente cada anotación. ¿Cuantos días llovió? ¿Nevó? ¿Hubo sol? Incluso puedes comparar semanas y ver cual semana fue la más lluviosa.

Recolecte objetos de distintos tamaños y formas. Pídale a su niño que elija dos cosas que tengan algo en común. A medida que comparan objetos, pídales que le cuenten las características que tienen en común. ¿Los objetos son todos del mismo color? ¿Forma? ¿Son hechos del mismo material? Esto ayuda a los niños a clasificar las cosas y encontrar correlaciones. Ud. puede fijar el nivel de complejidad de acuerdo a los objetos que eliges. Para que sea sencillo selecciona dos pelotas. Tendrán las misma forma. Dos zapatos del mismo par serán del mismo color.

Sabes? Las Matemáticas Pueden ser Realmente Entretenidas

Alguna de la información para este articulo y muchas de estas actividades han sido adaptadas de: Early Chilhood: Where Learning Begins -Mathematics- Actividades matemáticas para los padres y sus niños de dos a cinco años por Carol Sue Fromboluti, Natalie Rinck, editado por Diane
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Cómo Piensan los Niños

Puede haber notado que tu hija no piensa exactamente como un adulto. Incluso encuentras fascinante conversar con tu hija para saber como razona sobre el mundo. El psicólogo suizo Jean Piaget desarrollo su teoría del desarrollo cognitivo de los niños observando a sus propios niños resolver problemas que él les había planteado. De hecho, Piaget desarrolló una de las teorías más importantes sobre el desarrollo mental de los niños y como cambia su pensamiento y raciocinio. Aquí hay dos mini-experimentos basados en Piaget que puedes hacer con tus niños.

Separa 20 monedas en dos grupos de 10. Ordena el primer grupo de 10 hacia arriba exactamente igual al segundo grupo, moneda por moneda. Pregúntale a tu hija que línea tiene más monedas o si las dos líneas tienen el mismo número de monedas. Ella seguramente dirá que ambas líneas tienen el mismo número. Ahora, coloca las monedas en una fila, comparándola a la otra fila. Pregúntele a la niña que fila tiene más monedas o si ambas hileras tienen el mismo número. Su hija seguramente le dirá que la fila más larga tiene más monedas.

Los niños de menos de siete años generalmente creen que el número de monedas debe ser mayor cuando la fila es más larga. Ahora cuente las monedas de una fila y después la otra y demuestre que el número es igual. No se sorprenda si su niño aun cree que la fila más larga tiene más monedas.

Piaget llamó esto la conservación de número – la capacidad de comprender que el número de objetos es el mismo a pesar de su alineación. Los niños chicos generalmente no creen que es así. Para ellos la cantidad depende del orden en que están

configurados.

Una idea similar es la conservación de la materia. La cantidad es la misma, a pesar de su forma. La demostración clásica de este concepto utiliza dos bolas de arcilla, una de las cuales se desenrolla larga y delgada mientras el niño observa. Al preguntarle cual tiene más arcilla, o si ambas tienen la misma cantidad, la mayoría de los niños escogen una como la que tiene más arcilla porque es más larga o más alta. Hay otra versión que los padres pueden probar en casa –algo que podría llamarse antojadizamente la conservación de la galleta. Tome dos galletas grandes. Mientras su niño observa, quiebre la galleta en cuatro partes. Pídale a su hijo que elija cual quiere. Un niño que quiere "más galletas" generalmente elegirá los cuatro pedazos pequeños de la galleta. ¿Acaso ahora no tiene más galletas? En algún momento los niños se dan cuenta y no podrás usar esto otra vez, pero también demostrará que tu niño ha dado un gran salto cognitivo.

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Values

Three-year-old Suzy rushed to greet her grandmother at the door. "Happy birthday," Grandma said, as the two gave each other big hugs.

Grandma handed Suzy a beautifully wrappea package. Suzy tore off the paper, opened the box, and found a soft, cuddly teddy bear inside. Her disappointment was clear as she threw down the teddy bear, her face contorted and red.

"I already have two," she said in a tight, squeaky voice and began to cry.

Everyone has values, the principles on which we base our behavior. Sometimes people are aware of their values and can state them. Many people, however, have never stopped to consider exactly what values guide them.

Different people have different values. Any two parents are likely to share some values and not others. Sometimes their values may even be in conflict. One parent may value material goods, the other prefers to have as few things as possible.

Some values are held by many people. Cultures as a whole may emphasize some values over others. For example, American culture values independence and individuality while another culture may emphasize cooperation and being part of a group.

People show their values through their actions. A person who believes in caring will check to see if an elderly neighbor needs anything, or help a crying child who is lost in the mall. Someone who believes in being responsible will make sure to change the car's oil regularly, pay the bills on time, and keep an appointment. Yet another person who values clear thinking will consider carefully the pros and cons of traveling during a winter storm, or the future outcome of an action taken now.

Parents pass their values on to their children by the way they handle each day's events, the seemingly insignificant ones as well as the potential crises. The way Suzy's parents respond to her disappointment over the teddy bear will show their values.

If they value politeness and good manners, they might tell Suzy, "You can at least thank Grandma for remembering your birthday."

If they want Suzy to be in touch with her feelings, they would be more likely to acknowledge her disappointment: "You're disappointed that Grandma brought you a toy you already have."

If they want Suzy to be caring, they might help her to understand how her grandmother feels and to know what to say: "Grandma didn't know you already had that toy. She's feeling sad that you don't like her gift. Can you thank her for remembering your birthday?"

If Suzy's parents value all three principles of behavior – politeness, caring, and being in touch with her feelings -- they might say, "We know you're disappointed that you already have a teddy bear, but Grandma is feeling sad that you don't like her gift. Can you thank her anyhow and give her a big hug?"

If Suzy's parents do not know what their values are, however, their response to her behavior becomes unpredictable. One day Suzy is to be polite, another day she is to be in touch with her

feelings, and another day her behavior may simply be ignored. As a result, Suzy may be confused about how she is supposed to act.

What Are Your Values?

What values do you want your child to live by? What behaviors do you want to see? Do you want your child to be responsible and able to meet the expectations set by having chores around the house? Do you want your youngster to be caring and able to form lasting relationships? Or, perhaps you value a sense of being a part of the world around us, able to see the connectedness and beauty of life?

Sometimes it is hard to know the values we hold. Values form a constant backdrop to life and may become difficult to see. One way to discover your values is to write down a list of qualities that you consider to be the most important ones for a person to exhibit.

Another way is to write a narrative, a sort of thinking-aloud process in which you talk about what you'd like your child to be and why. You can think back to previous experiences, or even imagine various situations and consider what you'd like your youngster to do. You might think you'd like your child to 'fess up when he's done something wrong (honesty), or to help other children who need his help (caring). Or, perhaps you decide that you don't want people to be able to push your daughter around or make decisions for her (assertive and independent).

Readiness to Learn Values

Children learn to live by values, if they are given guidance when they are developmentally ready.

Babies and toddlers are very concrete. They seek to understand and explore their world in the only ways they can. They manipulate, look at, listen to, touch, taste, and smell everything. They learn values by experiencing them as a consequence of *our* values and behavior. The values we hold influence the way we respond to our babies. They learn to trust people when we reliably meet their needs. When they are hungry we feed them. When they are unhappy we soothe them.

Toddlers begin to care about others by discovering that living things are different from nonliving things. Pull another baby's hair and she will cry. An animal may bite, scratch, or run away, but a teddy bear does nothing.

Preschoolers understand their world by playing and interacting with other people. They learn values by living them.

Although their understanding is quite literal and concrete they are ready for more complicated concepts. They learn that people are both alike yet different from one another, and that different people enjoy doing different things. They learn that their aunt can make paper airplanes but not play the piano. Or that their grandfather is not very concerned with a child being quiet but he does care about being listened to when he says something.

But there is much they don't yet understand. They assume all the world thinks the same way and wants the same things that they do. When a three-year-old excitedly tells Grandma that he will play cars with his new baby brother he is revealing his enthusiasm for a new playmate. He is also demonstrating that he really knows nothing about babies. He expects the baby to be just like

Encouraging Values

Here are two widely held values and ways parents can encourage them in youngsters.

● **Compassion & Empathy**

As we acknowledge other people's feelings, thoughts and experiences, we naturally feel compassion for them -- a personal identification with them and a desire to help them in any distress. Through empathy we recognize our own humanity in others.

• *Encourage compassion and empathy*

Model respect for all living things. Collect harmless insects that get in the house and let them loose outside. Avoid purposely stepping on insects.

Use compassion when disciplining. Remember, everyone deserves a warning, and we all make mistakes. Use a kind and tempered voice and be sure the punishment fits the crime.

Encourage your children to help you gather items for charitable organizations.

● **Fairness**

To be fair we must regard others in an unbiased manner and treat people equitably, as we ourselves would like to be treated. Fair people maintain an honest, just perspective in their daily lives and in special situations.

• *Encourage fairness*

Encourage children to play board games like checkers, Parcheesi. Remind them that playing fairly means following the rules at all times. What would happen if there were no rules? Encourage children to play a game with no rules. Is it possible?

Refrain from making statements such as "Because I said so," Because I'm the adult" and "Because that's just the way it is." Children deserve explanations for why things are the way they are, and you need to remember that just because you're big, you're not always right. Fairness has nothing to do with size, age or position.

Help children develop a positive outlook. Help children keep a balance by encouraging them to focus on the many fair things in life as opposed to the few unfair things.

If your children are involved in sports, make sure your words and your actions convey the message that playing fairly is more important than winning.

Adapted with permission from *The Values Book: Teaching 16 basic values to young children* by Pam Schiller and Tamera Bryant; Gryphon House, Beltsville MD, 1998; 1-800-638-0928; http://www.gryphonhouse.com. The book looks at ways child care providers and parent educators can work with children and parents to promote value development. The books discusses the values (including a little poem about each one), things for adults to think about, and activities for children and parents. A very useful resource.

himself. Preschoolers have difficulty differentiating what they know and can do from what others know and can do.

Preschoolers live in a busy social world and they often need help managing its complexities. When you help your youngsters solve their child-size social difficulties you teach them your values. When they complain there's no chance for them to play in the doll corner, the way you respond and your suggestions provide important lessons.

Parenting with Values in Mind

Parents also integrate values into family life when they face dilemmas such as squabbling siblings, dividing up family chores, potty training, and more. Each of these, and other situations, provides an opportunity for parents to put their values into action.

There's a basic three-step process that you can use when dealing with most situations in your family in order to teach your values.

Step 1

Make a plan. Describe a situation in your family that needs attention. It could be a time of excitement, or even stress and sorrow. What is happening? Who is involved? What are their feelings? What has to be done and when?

Brainstorm ideas to deal with the situation - the more ideas the better. Some will be absurd, some funny, but some will sound just right. The objective is to think of lots of ideas without deciding right then whether each will work or not.

Now, make a plan of what to do. Choose possible solutions using your values as guides.

Step 2

Carry out the plan, putting your ideas into action.

Step 3

Reflect on the success of your plan. What worked well? What values do you feel your children now know and can use? What would you do differently next time?

A practical example:

Roseanne's 80 year-old father is dying. The baby won't remember his grandfather and won't be aware of the sorrow around him as long as he is fed, changed, and cuddled. But her preschool daughter will know what is going on. Roseanne knows this is an opportunity for her daughter to see family values in action.

Roseanne could decide to fully remove her daughter from the situation showing her the value of protecting children from unpleasantness. Her husband's parents would be happy to watch their granddaughter so Roseanne could send her to stay with them for a few days.

As an alternative Roseanne could decide to make her daughter a participant encouraging her to learn about emotions and how to handle them. Roseanne could take her daughter to see her grandfather one final time and talk to her about death and dying.

Of course, all children are different and parents need to consider not only parental values but also the age and temperament of the child. Parents might want to be more protective of a sensitive and vulnerable youngster but choose to involve a more resilient child.

There are also different degrees of awareness and participation and Roseanne could choose a solution that allowed her daughter some but not complete involvement.

Resolving Conflicting Values

Values aren't independent of one another. They can build and strengthen each other or they can pull in opposite directions.

Angelo gets a regular allowance because his parents want him to learn how to handle money responsibly. But Angelo often gives away his allowance to his friends. His parents are happy he's caring and generous but they wonder if he needs to become a bit more assertive and learn how to say "no." Or perhaps they feel he needs to develop better judgement about the circumstances that justify giving his money away (and how much to give). Angelo's parents must consider what they want their son to learn about values and how to accommodate both ideals.

Karen enjoys spending special time with her daughter. She wants to teach her youngster the importance of relationships. But she has also realized that they do a great deal of shopping together. This is in conflict with her value of being prudent with money. Karen's solution is to look for other activities they can enjoy together that don't involve shopping and, perhaps, even teach the wise use of money.

Another source of conflict occurs when

parents have different priorities for their values. One parent may stress obedience while the other fears that will create a child who doesn't think for himself. In another family, one parent's belief in having order, with things picked up and put away, runs into the other parent's belief in being spontaneous and engaged in interesting projects.

The only way to resolve these conflicts is to talk about them. Both parents need to discuss the values they hold and the reasons these values are important. They have to be willing to listen and understand their partner's point-of-view and recognize areas of agreement as well as areas of difference. They need to brainstorm ways to balance both positions and work at compromise (which teaches another important value). They may also have to be open to alternative ways to teach their values.

As children grow they will eventually question the values we have taught them. This natural, and probably necessary, stage of development is made more difficult if children have no firm foundation from which to start their exploration.

Values provide a crucial internal compass for youngsters to use as they travel the road to maturity, one which, hopefully, will keep them from getting lost along the way.

♦ Adapted with permission from *Using Your Values to Raise Your Child to be an Adult You Admire* by Harriet Heath, PhD, "Parenting Press, Inc."; Seattle, WA. 1-800-992-6657, http://www.ParentingPress.com

📖 ***The Bully Free Classroom*** by Allan L. Beane, PhD, Free Spirit Publishing; Minneapolis, MN 1999; Softcover $19.95. Aimed at teachers of grades K through 8, the book contains over 100 tips and strategies for handling bullies and victims. Topics include helping students accept their differences, identifying bullies or potential bullies, teaching positive self-talk, teaching mediation skills and much more. Each of the topics is short and to the point.

Bullies: *A Serious Problem for Kids*

Bullying behavior may seem rather insignificant compared to kids bringing guns to school and getting involved with drugs. Bullying is often dismissed as part of growing up. But it's actually an early form of aggressive, violent behavior. Statistics show that one in four children who bully will have a criminal record before the age of 30.

Bullies often cause serious problems that schools, families, and neighbors ignore. Teasing at bus stops, taking another child's lunch money insults and threats, kicking or shoving – it's all fair game to a bully. Fears and anxieties about bullies can cause some children to avoid school, carry a weapon for protection, or even commit more violent activity.

A Word About the Victim

Although anyone can be the target of bullying behavior, the victim is often singled out because of his or her psychological traits more than his or her physical traits. A typical victim is likely to be shy, sensitive, and perhaps anxious or insecure. Some children are picked on for physical reasons such as being overweight or physically small, having a disability, or belonging to a different race or religious faith.

A Word About the Bully

Some bullies are outgoing, aggressive, active, and expressive. They get their way by brute force or openly harassing someone. This type of bully rejects rules and regulations and needs to rebel to achieve a feeling of superiority and security. Other bullies are more reserved and manipulative and may not want to be recognized as harassers or tormentors. They try to control by smooth-talking, saying the "right" thing at the "right" time, and lying. This type of bully gets his or her power discreetly through cunning, manipulation, and deception.

As different as these two types may seem, all bullies have some characteristics in common. They are concerned with their own pleasure; want power over others; are willing to use and abuse other people to get what they want; feel pain inside, perhaps because of their own shortcomings; and find it difficult to see things from someone else's perspective.

What You Can Do

Listen to children. Encourage children to talk about school, social events, other kids in class, the walk or ride to and from school so you can identify any problems they may be having. Take children's complaints of bullying seriously. Probing a seemingly minor complaint may uncover more severe grievances. Children are often afraid or ashamed to tell anyone that they have been bullied, so listen to their complaints.

Watch for symptoms that children may be bullying victims, such as withdrawal, a drop in grades, torn clothes, or needing extra money or supplies. Tell the school or organization immediately if you think that your children are being bullied. Alerted caregivers can carefully monitor your children's actions and take steps to ensure your children's safety. Work with other parents to ensure that the children in your neighborhood are supervised closely on their way to and from school.

Don't bully your children yourself, physically or verbally. Use nonphysical, consistently enforced discipline measures as opposed to ridiculing, yelling at, or ignoring your children when they misbehave.

Help children learn the social skills they need to make friends. A confident, resourceful child who has friends is less likely to be bullied or to bully others. Praise children's kindness toward others. Let children know that kindness is valued.

Teach children ways to resolve arguments without violent words or actions. Teach children self-protection skills -- how to walk confidently, stay alert to what's going on around them, and to stand up for themselves verbally.

Provide opportunities for children to talk about bullying, perhaps when watching TV together, reading aloud, playing a game, or going to the park or a movie.

Recognize that bullies may be acting out feelings of insecurity, anger, or loneliness. If your child is a bully, help get to the root of the problem. Seek out specific strategies you can use at home from a teacher, school counselor, or child psychologist.

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Books On Tolerance

Books for Adults

📖 ***Hate Hurts: How children learn and unlearn prejudice*** by Caryl Stern-LaRosa and Ellen Hofheimer Bettmann; Scholastic Inc.; New York; 2000; Softcover; $9.95. The Anti-Defamation League is the moving force behind this book aimed at helping parents raise children to respect others. It includes stories, basic principles, skills and strategies. There are sections on things that make people different from one another (e.g. gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, culture and ethnicity), and what to do in specific situations. One example is when your youngster meets someone who speaks English with an accent and asks "Why does Lee sound so funny when he talks?" The book goes up to the teenage years and it will be useful along each step of your children's development.

📖 ***Starting Small: Teaching tolerance in preschool and the early grades*** by The Teaching Tolerance Project; Southern Poverty Law Center; Montgomery, AL; 1997; Paperback. Targeted to those working with young children the book explores how seven different classrooms across the country created inclusive, equitable, and caring environments. In addition to these stories of tolerance in action there are side pieces. ***Reflections*** provide information on research and developmental aspects, and ***Applications*** offers practical ideas. For example, one Application focused on helping children build friendship skills, a Reflection discussed research on the inclusive classroom.

Books for Children

📖 ***Mr. Lincoln's Way*** by Patricia Polacco; Philomel Books; New York; 2001; Hardcover; $16.99. Another beautifully written and illustrated book by Polacco. Mr. Lincoln is the school principal, beloved by all the students except Eugene. Eugene's father has taught him intolerance and hate and Mr. Lincoln patiently helps him learn acceptance and tolerance. Along the way there are wonderful messages.

📖 ***A Pig is Moving In!*** by Claudia Fries, Orchard Books (a Grolier Company); New York; 2000; Hardcover; $15.95. Everyone knows that Pigs are dirty and irresponsible, right? So, when Theodore Pig drops a piece of firewood the other neighbors tsk-tsk and assume that one of them had cleaned up. And so it goes through dropping flour, tracking mud onto the floor, etc. When the neighbors march upstairs to complain Theodore greets them with apologies for the mess, hoping that he had cleaned up thoroughly. Then, he invites them in for cookies and tea by the fire. The neighbors realize they were wrong to judge him so hastily. A perfect book to use as a springboard for discussions.

📖 ***Sister Anne's Hands*** by Marybeth Lorbiecki; illustrated by K. Wendy Popp; Puffin Books; New York; 2000; Paperback; $6.99. It's the 1960s, or there about, and Anna is about to get a new teacher, but she won't be like the other nuns. Her parents quietly express their concern "I don't know how a woman of her color is going to survive." Sister Anne is young, warm, and enthusiastic. Soon an act of racism is committed. Sister Anne's response is to show the children how hatred looks and how it feels. A powerful and moving book, yet perfect for children.

Dear Reader . . .

My son walked through the door in tears. He had just come home from first grade. "What happened," I asked immediately with great concern. "My teacher told me I was rude," he sobbed.

What values do we hold? Sometimes the clearest indication is the way our children behave and what upsets them, and us.

Although over the years I've learned a lot about our values this way, by looking at behavior and emotional reactions, what is crucial is that our children be raised with values. That we think about what we believe and send those lessons to our children, giving them an internal compass in a world that can often be confusing. As we think about the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, DC, and attacks all over the world, perhaps we need to reflect on the importance of tolerance. Hate cannot flourish in an atmosphere of respect for people and acceptance that we are all part of one world.

So, this month we're featuring an article based on Harriet Heath's book *Using Your Values to Raise Your Child to Be an Adult You Admire*. We've also got a box on two specific values and ways to encourage their development, and a piece on bullies. There's also reviews of books on teaching tolerance.

Sandy Allen's *Preschooler in the Kitchen* has a special treat to celebrate the New Year - a delicious baked chicken recipe.

This month we welcome a new occasional column, by Sandra Whiteside, which we call *The Pet Stop*. It comes in response to our summer pet issue which received great feedback. We are delighted that Sandra will be joining us as a contributor.

This is also our new combined November/December issue. We know you'll miss not having separate issues but we're making it up in the number of pages and amount of information. Did you know that in 1998 when we were publishing 11 issues a year there was a total of 50-information packed pages? Today, with 10 issues we've actually increased to 80 information-packed pages!

We're also enclosing our 2002 calendar as a special gift to our readers.

All of us here wish you a wonder-filled holiday season. And we'll be back at the beginning of the new year with more features, recipes, crafts, book reviews and information for parents & preschoolers.

Heather Schwartzberg

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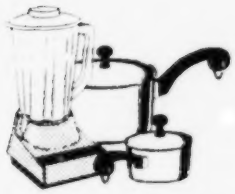
Preschooler in the Kitchen



A Treat to Celebrate the New Year

Another year coming to an end. Another season coming to pass. Perhaps it is a good time to reflect about the things we would like to accomplish, and to let the past go. We'll have another chance to make our dreams come true in the coming year.

This is also a wonderful time to gather with children, family and friends to enjoy a delicious meal with warm and open hearts, and laughter.

This dish came about when I did not know what to make for a group of friends who were coming to celebrate the end of the year. I did not want to prepare turkey, or ham, or roast beef, or leg of anything. That left chicken, and the idea for this dish was born. You can prepare the dish in advance, layering up to one day before baking.

Chicken Baked with Coconut

Soak the Chicken

1-1/2 pounds of chicken breast, thinly sliced or thin chicken cutlets
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
cold water sufficient to cover chicken

• Child: Place the chicken breasts in the bowl. Cover with water and add the vinegar. Mix gently and set aside for about 15 minutes. The vinegar brines the chicken making it tastier and more tender.

Marinate the Chicken

Juice of 1 lime
3 cloves of garlic, chopped finely
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp ground black pepper

• Adult: Cut the lime in half. Chop the garlic and set aside.

• Child: Squeeze the lime juice into a medium bowl. Add the garlic, salt and pepper. Mix gently.

• Child & Adult: Help child to place the chicken in the colander to drain the water. Rinse the chicken with cold water. Drain well.

• Child: Place the chicken in the lime juice mixture for about 1/2 hour covered in the refrigerator.

Prepare the Chicken

1 cup all-purpose flour
3-4 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons unsweetened grated coconut
1 tablespoon toasted bread crumbs

• Child: Measure 1 tablespoon of oil and use it to coat the baking dish. Measure 2 tablespoons of coconut and mix with 1 tablespoon of bread crumbs. Coat the oiled baking dish with the coconut mixture.

• Child: Remove the breast slices from marinade and pat dry. Lightly coat each slice with the flour.

• Adult: Place 2 tablespoons olive oil in heated skillet. Saute the chicken slices, about 2 minutes on each side. Do not let them brown. Remove from the pan as cooked. Add more oil if needed.

Layer the Dish

1-1/2 pounds red potatoes
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium onions, thinly sliced
1 cup roasted red peppers, cut into julienne pieces
1 cup unsweetened grated coconut
1 cup grated parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons flour
1-1/2 cups chicken broth
1/2 cup fresh parsley, rinsed and chopped

• Adult: Scrub potatoes, leaving the skin on the potatoes. Cover with cold water and bring to boil. Lower the heat and let simmer for about 20 minutes or until tender. To test, insert the tip of a sharp paring knife into the potato. If it goes in easily the potatoes are tender. Remove from the heat and discard the water. Let potatoes cool. Do not peel them, just slice them and set aside.

• Adult: Place the chicken broth in a saucepan over low heat and bring to a simmer. In the same skillet in which the chicken breasts were sauteed, add 2 tablespoons olive oil and 2 tablespoons of flour. Mix and cook until the flour turns a light brown color. Carefully add the broth mixing with a wire whisk until smooth. Remove from the heat.

• Adult: Heat oven to 350 F. In a clean skillet saute the onions until translucent in the remaining 2 tablespoons oil. Add the red peppers and mix well. Cook for about 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

• Child & Adult: Now the fun part. Arrange a layer of potatoes on the bottom of baking dish. Add a layer of chicken, a layer of the onion/pepper mixture, sprinkle with parsley, sprinkle with coconut and sprinkle with cheese. Keep making layers until there's only the last of the cheese and coconut left. Spread the chicken broth sauce over the layers. Sprinkle with the remaining coconut and cheese.

• Adult: Place the baking dish in the oven and bake for 40 minutes. Serve hot. Serves 4 - 6 people

A tossed green salad is a good accompaniment. Fruits and vanilla ice cream are ideal as a dessert. For a beverage try spiced hot cider.

Let's lift our mugs of cider and toast. Feliz Ano Novo -. Happy New Year. May your dreams come true and happiness follow them!

Sandra Allen

THE PET STOP

A Pet for the Holidays?
Try It On for Size

So many adorable pets are featured in holiday cards. What's a Christmas tree without a beautiful golden retriever pup with a big red bow sitting next to it? But, how can you know if this is truly the time to get a pet?

You don't want to bring a new pet into your home only to realize that it was a BIG mistake. That's how the shelters end up with twelve million cats and dogs every year. And who even counts how many turtles and goldfish are flushed away during that time?

So how do we find out if a pet really is for us? How about trying on other people's pets for size? Would you think of buying a car without a test drive? Ask friends, relatives, parents in your toddler's play groups if they have pets. Find out their experiences. You will not believe how much information will come bubbling forth. Pet owners love to talk about their pets. If it seems as though a particular animal would fit in to your home, ask if you and your family could pet-sit for them sometime. You will probably be met with stunned silence followed by joyful squeals of delight as the pet owner realizes you are making a serious offer. You have now learned one of the downsides of pet ownership - it can be really difficult to get away from this beloved family member.

Carefully discuss the pet sitting offer with the owner. Will their pet be easily able to come and live in your home for awhile? A cat that hides under the sofa for four days will hardly teach your children anything. Should birds and their cages or fish and their tanks come to visit or should you go there each day? Talk about everything with the pet owners. Obviously, you will make sure that the pet in question is gentle and good with young children. Have the animal's owner introduce you and your family to the pet in its own home. Make many visits prior to the owner's leaving. Be sure that you have complete instructions on the care and feeding of the pet, the phone number of the veterinarian, and where the owner may be reached in an emergency or what local friend or relative can be reached.

You and your family will learn much from the experience. Will you discover pet allergies? (If you already know that your child or anyone in the family has pet allergies, don't even consider pet-sitting with that particular animal.) In regard to fur, can you cope with white hairs on your black clothes - permanently? Did you really understand a puppy's incredible need to chew - everything? Could you believe that your adorable puppy will need to go outside at 5 AM - every day? Did you know that a big, friendly dog's tail will clear a coffee table and everything on it in one fell swoop? How do you relate to scooping kitty litter? Slimy fish tanks? Pooper-scoopers? Piles of bird seed everywhere? Trying it on for size should help you decide whether or not a particular creature will bring you and your family great joy or perhaps, might not be right for you at this time. And remember, if you decide that it isn't right for your family, you can still keep visiting and pet-sitting. It can be fun and won't require a long-term commitment. Your kids will learn about animals and you will not feel overwhelmed, guilty, or overburdened.

Please write and let me know what questions you may have, what topics you would like covered in future issues, and how your foray into pet-sitting goes! I will be delighted to hear from you. Write to me at: *Parent & preschooler Newsletter*; NSC&FGC; "The Pet Stop;" Sandra Whiteside; 480 Old Westbury Rd.; Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215.

Sandra Whiteside, CSW

When Children Are Scared

The recent events in New York City have caused grief, fear, and trauma for thousands of families and have had a far reaching impact throughout the country. We must find ways to make our children feel safe. Parents who are looking for ways to help their children may find themselves overwhelmed by their own emotions.

Our very young children are protected by their own inability to comprehend war and death. However, they are not too young to sense the despair and anxiety of their caregivers. Infants and toddlers will cope if the adults around them can cope. Adults must find ways to address their needs and to help their babies feel safe.

Preschoolers need information and it's hard for parents to come up with language that satisfies curiosity but doesn't create more worry. Children already know that something bad happened and for grown-ups to deny that may create more anxiety. Kids need to know that the grown-ups will make sure they are OK. One five year old collected band aids to send to the firemen who were hurt at the World Trade Center. His parents had given him enough information so that he would not be frightened by what he might overhear, and had provided an opportunity for him to feel powerful enough to help.

Sandra Wolkoff, CSW

Library Resources

Holiday and Seasonal

📖 ***Cooking Around the Calendar with Kids*** by Amy Houts; Snaptail Press-Images Unlimited Publishing; Maryville, MO, 2001; Softcover; $12.95 (phone: 660-582-4279; website: http://www.imagesunlimitedpub.com). Long-term readers of *P&p* will remember Amy Houts who used to do our *Preschooler in the Kitchen*. Now, she's come out with a fun cookbook to use with kids. It's organized into seasons. Each section is filled with great activity ideas, recipes, party ideas, and information on the major holidays and even lunch box suggestions.

Thanksgiving

📖 ***Lots of Thanks! A little book about being thankful*** illustrated by Thierry Courtin; Grosset & Dunlap; New York, 2001; Boardbook $4.99. A perfect book to read with little ones on Thanksgiving (and year 'round). What is the young child thankful for? Parents, and hugs, and friends, and for the things that bring happiness.

📖 ***The Night Before Thanksgiving*** by Natasha Wing; illustrated by Tammie Lyon; Grosset & Dunlap; New York, 2001; Softcover $3.49. A Thanksgiving version of 'Twas the Night Before... complete with preparation, the fun of playing with cousins, and the big family dinner.

📖 ***One Little, Two Little, Three Little Pilgrims*** by B. G. Hennessy; illustrated by Lynne Cravath; Puffin Books; New York; 2001; Softcover $6.99. The heart of the story is how the pilgrims and the Native American Wampanoag prepared for the harvest and came together to celebrate Thanksgiving. The information is accurate and well-documented. Both parent and child will learn something.

Winter Holidays

📖 ***Chanukah Lights Everywhere*** by Michael J. Rosen; illustrated by Melissa Iwai; Gulliver Books-Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA; 2001; Hardcover $16.00. The family is getting ready for Chanukah and each evening brings something different. A Note about Chanukah Lights at the end tells the history of the holiday.

📖 ***Elijah's Angel*** by Michael J. Rosen; illustrated by Aminah Brenda Lynn Robinson, Voyager Books-Harcourt Brace & Company; San Diego, CA; 1997; Softcover $6.00. The story is about the friendship between Elijah Pierce (recognized as one of America's fifteen master traditional artists) and a young Jewish boy. When Pierce gives the boy a special gift, one of his carvings of a Christian guardian angel, the boy's parents explain that it's also an angel of friendship and friendship means the same thing in every religion. And that is the message of the season.

📖 ***I'll Be Home For Christmas*** by Holly Hobbie; Little, Brown and Company; Boston; 2001; Hardcover $15.95. Another wonderful Toot & Puddle book. This time Toot has taken off for a family reunion in Scotland. He promises he'll be home for Christmas, but his journey is filled with problems. Puddle is busy decorating and cooking. Will Toot make it to Woodcock Pocket in time?

📖 ***Just in Time for Christmas*** by Louise Borden; illustrated by Ted Lewin; Scholastic Inc, New York; 2000; Paperback $5.99. The family comes to make their cream candy as they do every year. Will's beloved dog Luke is missing and Great Gran's not as sharp as she used to be. But the family is still enjoying the candy-making, Christmas and being together.

📖 ***Mim's Christmas Jam*** by Andrea Davis Pinkney; illustrated by Brian Pinkney; Gulliver Books-Harcourt, Inc.; San Diego, CA; 2001; Hardcover $16.00. A lovely story of the season, with a bit of history. It was 1915 and Pap was in New York City working on building the subway line. The bosses were mean. They even had to work on Christmas. If Pap can't come home Mim can still send him a taste of the season, a jar of her belly-hum jam. Pap's generous offer to share the jam with those bosses changes their outlook.

📖 ***The Ugly Menorah*** by Marissa Moss; Farrar Straus Giroux; New York; 1996; Hardcover $14.00. It's the first holiday without Grandpa and Rachel misses him. She also thinks that her Grandma's menorah is ugly. But when she learns that Grandpa had made it himself because they couldn't afford one, Rachel understands that it is the meaning behind the menorah that makes it beautiful.

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PARENT AND PRESCHOOLER

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NEWSLETTER

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER

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Winner of a 1998 and 1999 Parent's Choice Approval Award

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Valores

Susana, de tres años, se abalanzó a saludar a su abuela que estaba en la puerta. "Feliz cumpleaños", le dijo su abuela, mientras las dos se daban grandes abrazos.

La abuela le entregó a Susana un paquete hermosamente envuelto. Susana lo desenvolvió rápidamente, y encontró un delicado oso peluche. Su desilusión estaba claro cuando tiró el oso peluche a suelo, su cara roja y convulsionada. "Ya tengo dos", dijo en una voz antipática, chillona y se puso a llorar.

Todo el mundo tiene valores, que son los principios en que basamos nuestra conducta. A veces la gente tiene conciencia de sus valores y los puede enunciar. Sin embargo, muchas personas nunca se han detenido a considerar que valores los dirigen.

Distintas personas tienen distintos valores. Dos padres seguramente comparten algunos valores y no otros. Incluso a veces sus valores pueden estar en conflicto. Un padre puede valorar los bienes materiales mientras que el otro prefiere tener las menos cosas posibles.

Algunos valores son compartidos por muchas personas. Algunas culturas pueden recalcar ciertos valores sobre otros. Por ejemplo, la cultura norteamericana valora la independencia y el individualismo mientras que otras culturas pueden destacar la cooperación y pertenecer a un grupo.

Las personas demuestran sus valores a través de sus acciones. Una persona que cree en la solidaridad verá si un vecino anciano necesita algo, o ayudará a un niño perdido que llora en un centro comercial. Alguien que cree en la responsabilidad se asegurara de cambiar el aceite del automóvil regularmente, pagará sus cuentas a tiempo, y concurrirá a una cita. Sin embargo, otra persona que valora pensar claramente considerará cuidadosamente todos las ventajas y desventajas de viajar durante una tormenta invernal, o sobre las futuras consecuencias de una acción que adopta ahora.

Los padres le traspasan los valores a sus niños por la manera que manejan los eventos de cada día, los que parecen insignificantes tanto como las posibles crisis. La manera en que los padres de Susana reaccionaron a su desilusión con el oso peluche demuestran sus valores.

Si valoran la buena educación y la cortesía, le podrían decir a Susana, "Por lo menos podrías agradecerle a tu abuelita por acordarse de tu cumpleaños".

Si quieren que Susana esté en contacto con sus sentimientos, seguramente reconocerán su desilusión: "Estás desilusionada que tu abuelita te trajo un juguete que ya tenías".

Si quieren que Susana sea solidaria, la podrían ayudar a comprender como se siente su abuelita y a saber que decir: "Tu abuelita no sabía que tu ya tenías ese juguete. Se siente triste que no te haya gustado su regalo. Le puedes dar las gracias por haberse acordado de tu

cumpleaños"?

Si los padres de Susana valoran los tres principios de la conducta –buenas maneras, estar en contacto con sus sentimientos y la solidaridad– podrían decir, "Sabemos que estás desilusionada porque ya tienes un oso peluche, pero la abuelita se siente triste porque no te gustó su regalo. De todas maneras podrías agradecerle y darle un gran abrazo"?

Sin embargo, si los padres de Susana no saben cuales son sus valores, su respuesta a su conducta será impredecible. Un día Susana tiene que ser bien educada, otro día tiene que estar en contacto con sus emociones, y otro día su conducta puede ser simplemente ignorada. El resultado es que Susana puede estar confundida en cuanto a como actuar.

Cuales son sus Valores?

¿Cuales son los valores con que debe vivir su niño? ¿Qué conductas quieres ver? ¿Quieres que tu niña sea responsable y pueda cumplir con las expectativas fijadas haciéndola tener tareas domesticas en la casa? ¿Quieres que tu hija sea solidaria y que sea capaz de formar relaciones duraderas? ¿O, quizás valoras un sentimiento de ser parte del mundo que nos rodea, de poder ver la conexión y la belleza de la vida?

A veces es difícil saber qué valores tenemos. Los valores forman un constante telón de fondo y puede ser difícil verlos. Una manera de descubrir tus valores es escribiendo una lista de cualidades que consideras que son las más importantes que debe tener una persona.

Otra manera es escribir una narración, una especie de proceso de pensar en voz alta en el cual te refieres a que te gustaría que fuera tu hija y por qué. Puedes pensar sobre experiencias previas, o incluso imaginarte distintas situaciones y considerar que te gustaría que hiciera tu hija. quizás pienses que te gustaría que ella asumiera responsabilidad cuando hizo algo malo (honestidad), o ayudar a otros niños que necesitan su ayuda (solidaridad). O quizás decidas que no quieres que la gente pueda atropellar a tu hija o tomar decisiones por ella (asertiva e independiente).

Estar Preparados Para Aprender Valores

Los niños aprenden a vivir de acuerdo a valores si se les das dirección cuando estén listos.

1iteral y concreta están preparados para conceptos más complejos. Aprenden que las personas son parecidas y al mismo tiempo diferentes entre si, y que a distintas personas les gusta hacer distintas cosas. Aprenden que su tía puede hacer aviones de papel pero no sabe tocar el piano. O que su abuelo no le molesta que un niño no mantenga el silencio pero si le importa que lo escuchen cuando dice algo.

Pero hay muchas cosas que aun no entienden. Suponen que todo el mundo piensa de la misma manera y quieren las mismas cosas que ellos. Cuando un niño de tres le dice emocionadamente a su abuela que va a jugar con los autitos con su hermanito menor, está revelando su entusiasmo por un nuevo compañero de juegos. También esta demostrando que no sabe nada sobre los bebés. Él espera que el bebé sea igual que él. Los preescolares tienen dificultades en diferenciar lo que Los bebés y los niños chicos son muy concretos. Buscan comprender y explorar su mundo de las únicas maneras que pueden. Manipulan las cosas, miran, escuchan, tocan, saborean y huelen todo. Aprenden valores experimentándolos como una consecuencia de nuestros valores y conductas. Los valores que tenemos influencian la manera en que respondemos a nuestros bebés. Aprenden a tener confianza en la gente cuando respondemos a sus necesidades con certeza. Cuando tienen hambre los alimentamos. Cuando no están felices los consolamos.

Los niños chicos aprenden a sentir afecto por otra gente al descubrir que las cosas vivas son distintas a las cosas no vivas. Si le tiras el pelo a otro bebé llorará. Un animal puede morder, arañar, arrancarse, pero un oso peluche no hace nada.

Los preescolares comprenden su mundo jugando e interactuando con otras personas. Aprenden valores viviéndolos.

Aunque su comprensión es muy saben y lo que pueden hacer de lo que otros saben y pueden hacer.

Los preescolares viven en un mundo social atareado y frecuentemente necesitan ayuda para manejar sus complejidades. Cuando ayudas a tus niños a resolver sus dificultades sociales de pequeños, les estas enseñando tus valores. Cuando se quejan que no tienen oportunidad de jugar en el rincón de las muñecas, ¿cómo quieres que resuelvan ese problema? La manera en que respondes dan lecciones importantes.

Ser Padres con Los valores en Mente

Los padres también integran valores a la vida familiar cuando enfrentan dilemas como los hermanos que pelean, división de las tareas familiares, adquirir una mascota familiar, entrenarlos a usar el baño, alimentar al bebé, y muchos otros. Cada uno de estas, y otras situaciones, le dan a los padres una oportunidad para que pongan sus valores en acción y activamente enseñarles a sus hijos.

Hay un proceso básico de tres pasos que puedes usar para enfrentar la mayoría de las situaciones familiares para poder enseñarles tus valores.

Primer Paso

Haga un plan. Describa una situación en su familia que requiere atención. Puede ser un momento de agitación, o incluso de estrés y pena. Cualquiera que sea la situación descríbala. ¿Qué está pasando? ¿Quien á involucrado? ¿Cuales son sus sentimientos? ¿Qué tiene que hacerse y cuando?

Piense sobre ideas para enfrentar la situación - entre más ideas mejor. Algunas serán absurdas, otras divertidas, pero algunas serán casi perfectas. El objetivo de estas sesiones es imaginarse muchas ideas sin decidir en ese momento si cada una va a funcionar o no.

Ahora, formule un plan sobre que se puede hacer sobre la situación. Elija posibles soluciones usando sus valores como guía.

Segundo Paso

Implemente el plan, poniendo sus ideas en acción.

Tercer Paso

Reflexione sobre el éxito de su plan. ¿Qué funcionó bien? ¿Qué valores crees que tus niños saben ahora y cuales pueden usar? ¿Qué harías distinto la próxima vez?

Un Ejemplo Práctico:

El padre de Rosario, que tiene 80 años, está muriendo. El bebé no se acordará y no tendrá conciencia del dolor a su alrededor con tal que lo alimenten, le cambien los pañales, y lo tomen en brazos. Pero su hija preescolar sabrá lo que está pasando. Rosario sabe que esta es una oportunidad para que su hija veo los valores familiares en acción.

Rosario podría decir remover completamente a su hija de la situación demostrándole el valor de proteger a los niños de cosas desagradables. Los padres de Rosario estarían felices de cuidar a su nieta, así que Rosario podría mandarla a que se quedara con ellos por unos días.

Otra alternativa es que Rosario pueda decidir hacer a su hija participante y así alentará su conciencia y aprenderá sobre las emociones y como manejarlas. Rosario podría llevar a su hija a ver a su abuelo por última vez y hablarle sobre la muerte y morir.

Evidentemente, todos los niños son distintos y los padres deben considerar no solo los valores de los padres sino que también la edad y temperamento del niño. Los padres quizás quieran ser más protectores de un niño sensible y vulnerable, pero opten por involucrar más a un niño más dúctil.

También hay distintos grados de conciencia y participación y Rosario podría elegir una solución que le permitiera algo de participación a su hija.

Resolución de Valores Contradictorios

Los valores no son independientes entre si. Pueden fortalecerse y complementarse entre si o pueden ir en direcciones completamente opuestas.

Ángel recibe una mesada regularmente porque sus padres quieren que aprenda a manejar el dinero responsablemente. Pero Ángel frecuentemente regala su mesada a sus amigos. Aunque sus padres están felices que sea solidario y generoso, los hace pensar si él no debiera ser un poco más asertivo y aprender a decir "no". O quizás piensan que necesita desarrollar mejor criterio sobre las circunstancias que justifican regalar su dinero (y cuanto dar). Los padres de Ángel deben considerar que quieren que aprenda su hijo sobre valores y como dirimir ambos ideales.

A Karen le gusta pasar tiempo con su hija. Ella quiere enseñarle la importancia de las relaciones. Pero se ha dado cuenta que salen mucho de compras (y gastan mucho dinero) juntas. Esto está en contradicción con su valor de ser prudente con el dinero. La solución de Karen es buscar otras actividades que pueden gozar juntas que no implique compras y, quizás, incluso que enseñen el uso inteligente del dinero.

Otra fuente de conflicto ocurre cuando los padres tienen distintas prioridades para sus valores. Un padre puede hacer hincapié de la obediencia mientras que el otro teme que eso va a crear un niño que no piensa por si mismo. En otra familia, la idea de un padre de tener orden en la casa con todas las cosas guardadas y ordenadas, entra en conflicto directo con la creencia del otro padre de que hay que ser espontáneo y de involucrarse en proyectos interesantes.

La única manera de resolver estos conflictos es conversando sobre ellos.

Ambos padres deben discutir los valores que tienen y las razones por lo cual estos valores son importantes. Tienen que estar dispuestos a escuchar y comprender los puntos de vista de su pareja y reconocer ámbitos de acuerdo tanto como ámbitos de discrepancias. Necesitan pensar sobre maneras de equilibrar ambas posiciones, quizás incluso tratar de transar (lo que enseña otro valor importante). Quizás también tendrán que estar abiertos a maneras alternas para enseñar sus valores.

A medida que los niños crecen, eventualmente cuestionaran los valores que les hemos enseñado. Esta etapa de desarrollo natural, y seguramente necesaria, se hace más difícil si los niños no tienen una base sólida desde la cual pueden iniciar su exploración.

Los valores dan una brújula interna cesencial para que los niños viajen en su camino a la madurez, una que, esperamos, los ayude a no perderse en el camino.

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